

Exploring the issues and challenges in managing themed restaurant in Klang Valley, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Themed restaurant emphasizes the staging of the dining experience to attract its patrons. Its unique concept and décor excite patrons to explore new food consumption experience and make them a popular choice in the market. However, it appears that restaurants in this niche have shorter 'shelf life' due to various managerial issues that force them to close. These restaurants are also too dependent on trends and would slowly vanish when it is over. Therefore, themed restaurants are seen to have more potential problems and have a high risk of sustaining in the industry. Thus, this research aims to identify the internal issues in managing themed restaurants and explore the business operation's external challenges. A qualitative research approach was implemented through semi-structured interviews with ten managers of themed restaurants across the Klang Valley area. The interview sessions were recorded and then transcribed, coded, themed, and analyzed using thematic analysis. Results concluded that the managers' internal issues are financial, sales and marketing, design and layout, location, and staff. On the other hand, customers, competitors, price of good fluctuation, and suppliers are the external challenges in managing themed restaurants. The findings of this study contributed to the theoretical knowledge of themed restaurants within the Malaysia context and benefited the restaurant owners. It may assist the existing restaurants in improving the business strategy to overcome the challenges and maneuver the new entry owners in the beginning stage of their entrepreneurial journey.

Keyword: Themed restaurant; Challenges; Restaurant management; Trend; Risk