

The Effect of Street Food Attributes on Enhancing Food Tourism in Malaysia: The Mediation Role of Tourist Perception

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Abstract:

Tourism Malaysia symbolizes street food as a major antecedent in attracting International tourists for their travelling purpose to this country. This study aims to investigate how street food attributes affect the enhancement of food tourism in Malaysia. Using a sample of 313 tourists, a survey was conducted at Jalan Alor in Kuala Lumpur and George Town in Penang who were international tourists consuming street food. The findings confirm that a positive and significant relationship is found between product quality and tourist satisfaction. Furthermore, a positive and significant relationship is also found between hygiene & ambience and tourist satisfaction. Then, a positive and significant relationship remains between service quality and tourist satisfaction. Besides, this study also claims that tourist perception mediates the relationship between product quality and service quality with tourist satisfaction. But, this study claims that tourist perception doesn't mediate the relationship between hygiene & ambience and tourist satisfaction. Smart PLS 3.0 was applied to analyse the data following the quantitative method.

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INTRODUCTION

The street food plays a vital role in enhancing the tourism sector of any country. The street food carries out the culture and tradition of any countries. The tourism sector of any country depends on their food habits and food availability (Tunung et al., 2007; Modarressi and Thong, 2010; Alamo-Tonelada, Silaran and Bildan, 2018). In this sense, Malaysia is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the ASEAN region. Malaysia is acknowledged worldwide as branding 'Malaysia: Truly Asia'. United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) declares Malaysia as one

of the top ten tourist's destinations. From worldwide point of view, the tourism industry is turning into a fundamental segment in economic development agenda and it consistently present a positive effect on the overall economy (Rishad, Raju and Kassim, 2019; Goeldner and Ritchie, 2006; Tosun, Temizkan, Timothy and Fyall, 2007). The tourism industry includes the exercises of people heading out to and remaining in places outside their usual environment which don't take more than one consecutive year (Mukherjee, Mondal, De, Misra and Pal, 2018). The development of tourist arrivals to Malaysia has caused Malaysia to tourist arrivals

to Malaysia locally among the international tourists. The street food of Malaysia is perceived as having the Best Street Food in Asia by Time magazine in 2004. Since Malaysian food is not one particular kind of food, however a one of a kind culinary range beginning from Malaysia's multi-ethnic populace that has a mix of various tastes, fixings and cooking techniques from one another, the gastronomic routes in the nation could be promoted vigorously. The legitimacy of the treats of each state can be featured as "the state for gastronomy route" (Zainal, Zali and Kasim, 2010; Hafiz, Zainal, Nizan and Shahariah, 2013; Hasan Polas, Juman, Karim, Tabash and Hossain, 2020). In this study, we found that there is a positive and significant relationship between product quality, hygiene & ambiance and service quality with tourist satisfaction. Besides, this study also claims that tourist perception mediates the relationship between product quality and service quality with tourist satisfaction. This study also claims that tourist perception doesn't mediate the relationship between hygiene & ambiance and tourist satisfaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Product Quality and Tourist Satisfaction

In the first hypothesis, we predict that there is positive and significant relationship between product quality and tourist satisfaction. As we know that every business owns specific products or services which they produce themselves or sell to the customers and get profit in return. In the case of restaurants, food is the most important elements of any street food restaurants (Rishad, 2018; Sulek and Hensley, 2004; Namkung and Jang, 2007). They lump all food attributes into only food quality. As per Ottaviano and Peri (2006), food quality is an outright necessity to fulfil the needs and desires for street restaurants customers. Knowing the significance of food quality in the street restaurants, past studies have inspected different which attract the tourist coming from home and abroad. There are

a portion of the review of the literature uncovers that the general portrayal of food quality among researchers underscores on introduction, menu assortment, solid choices, taste, freshness and temperature. Temperature is additionally a tactile component of food quality (Liu and Jang, 2009; Kim, Ng and Kim, 2009). As indicated by Delwiche (2004), temperature impact how to get the flavour of food has given; this will collaborate with other tangible properties, for example, taste, smell and sight. At that point, the temperature could be considered as one determinant captivating pleasure in the food experience by tourists (Caporale and Monteleone, 2004). Taste is viewed as a key quality in food in the street restaurants (Männistö et al., 1999). Numerous tourists have become food savvy, so the flavour of food in restaurant has become increasingly important (Cortese, 2003). It is accordingly not amazing that a pitiful street restaurant with gourmet cooking is stuffed with customer. Likewise, the taste is normally accepted to impact street restaurants customer which those places as tourists. It is important to satisfy tourists as they come for getting the best food experience from the tourist place. If they become satisfied, they will visit those places again. Later they will inform others regarding the food quality of those places. In this ways, the tourist sectors in Malaysia will prosper as more tourists will visit again and again those places because of good food quality. Thus, we hypothesize that,

H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between product quality and tourist satisfaction.

2.2 Hygiene & Ambiance and Tourist Satisfaction

In the second hypothesis, we predict that there is a positive and significant relationship between food hygiene & ambiance and tourist satisfaction. Food hygiene and ambiance is a crucial public health issues which affects the tourists of all countries. Usually, food handlers play a vital role in food safety and ambiance in the conduction of food poisoning as they ought to familiarize pathogens info foods during production, processing,

distribution and at the time of presentation (Ansari-Lari, Soodbakhsh & Lakzadeh, 2010; Abdul-Mutalib et al., 2012). A comprehension of food hygiene procedures and potential factors that cause food borne illness was seen as significant for all food handlers.

Food safety and hygiene practices are two things that are reliant in the arrangement of safe food. Food safety implies that tourists are certain about consuming food that won't cause mischief or infection (Sani and Siow, 2014). Adaptation of hygiene practices by the association through giving a decent, spotless and sorted out capacity would influence food safety. However, most food handlers showed poor individual hygiene and poor personal habits. Abandoning food-hygiene practices will prompt foodborne infections which demonstrate a disappointment in hygiene management practices in dealing with food (Akabanda, Hlortsi and Owusu-Kwarteng, 2017; Zanin et al., 2017).

Food hygiene has been characterized as the neatness of the food that is created. There are three regions of food hygiene: safety procedures, cleaning practices, and confidence management or control procedures. The prerequisite for upgrading food hygiene relies upon safety procedures and essential food dealing with practices (Aksoydan, 2007; Barber, Goodman and Goh, 2011). Food-hygiene practices incorporate individual hygiene practices, food served and atmosphere. Food handlers who are associated with food getting ready and serving need to have a consciousness of food hygiene practices all through the entire errand to ensure food safety (Fatimah, Boo, Sambasivan and Salleh, 2011). Three components of food service management performance; food performance, service performance, and ambience performance (Djekic et al., 2014) are the hospitality service attributes basic for making a fulfilled tourist and an extraordinary eating experience. Choi, MacLaurin Cho and Hahm (2010) in their examination showed that food quality is food performance, service reliability is service performance, behaviour and attitude of the employees (Park, Almanza, Miao, Sydnor and Jang,

2016) and natural neatness are the ambience performance. In this ways, tourists are being satisfied which ultimately increase their intention to revisit and to inform others to visit those places. Thus, we hypothesize that,

H2: There is a positive and significant relationship between food hygiene & ambience and tourist satisfaction.

2.3 Service Quality and Tourist Satisfaction

In the third hypothesis, we predict that there is a positive and significant relationship between service quality and tourist satisfaction. Usually, quality service establishes a positive connection in customers mind. Customers mind can peruse just when they consume superbly and take decision to return (Knutson, Stevens and Patton, 1996; Petrick, 2002; Davidson, McPhail and Barry, 2011). As showed by past researchers, service quality impacts on customer satisfaction which makes the street food increasingly solid and reliable to the tourists (Al-Azzam, 2015). Brock (2005) additionally expressed that service quality impacts on the customer satisfaction which ultimately means to increase the satisfaction of tourists. At the point when tourists get quality service from street food stall, they become fulfilled regardless of long holding up line. A definitive goal of customers is to consume good food. At the point when they get legitimate service, they become faithful to the business.

Polas et al. (2017) found in his study that service quality with great food suggests a positive image on tourist satisfaction. In this time, good service quality causes the tourists to return to that street food stall which ultimately influencing on enhancing tourism sectors. Quality is the totality of components and properties of a thing or organization that bears on its ability to meet communicated or induced needs (Ellis and Norton, 1993; McAlexander, Kaldenberg and Koenig, 1994). Quality emphasizes an association between the tourists and his inspiration on one hand and the thing or organization being jumped on the other. Quality is believed to be

probably the best levers for displaying of organizations. Service quality is insignificant, relativistic, and fearless and will in general self-destruct. Service quality is more a component of mien than innovation. It involves particular quality (essential advance) and valuable quality (fragile part). A bit of the difficulties of choosing service quality would earnestly let customers to make high enthusiastic judgment about the idea of organizations. Polas et al., (2018) contended in his study that there are a few factors which play an essential driver for any drive-through restaurants, for example, service quality, service quality, interior design and decoration, restaurant location, and waiting time. In the event that these driving factors don't helpful to restaurant customers, at that point the restaurant will go down (Vazifehdust, Khanzadeh and Bigdeli, 2013; Polas, Jahanshahi and Rahman, 2018). It happens when tourists become confounding about the food stall. That is the reason, maintaining good and standard quality nature of good and standard quality play a significant forerunner for restaurants reputations. Thus, we hypothesize that,

H3: There is a positive and significant relationship between service quality and tourist satisfaction.

2.4 The Mediation role of Tourist Perception

In the fourth, fifth and sixth hypothesis, we predict that tourist perception mediates the relationship between product quality, hygiene & ambiance and service quality with tourist satisfaction. One of the primary purposes behind the expanding buying of street food among tourist is the perceived value. Perceived value can be depicted as he in general appraisal of what is received and what is given (Li, Chen, Govindan and Jin, 2018; Li and Green, 2011). It is a hole between consumer perceived benefits (quality) and perceived costs, both monetary (price) and non-monetary (time, exertion) (Pham, Kim, Walker, DeNardin and Le, 2019; Bassey, 2014; Owino, Muturi and Wadawi, 2014).

For street food this value include the affordable price purchasers pay for the huge segment, the quality food and service they get at the cost they pay just as the time and exertion in getting the food (Hai, Le Duc Toan and Thuong, 2017). Most tourists who eat street food are subject to the food vendors who prepare and prepare food for them in which their hygienic implementations influence them straightforwardly (Dobson et al., 2006). Anyway because of the restricted accessible facilities of street food operation tourists perceive of street food of being high food safety risk. The insufficient food storage, average individual cleanliness, cross-polluting among crude and prepared food, ill-advised strategies of warming and warming of food, cooking food improperly, permitting food to experience too much exposure without covering it, usage of food additives, and prohibited risky synthetic compounds, and selling lapsed items are only a portion of the fundamental saw road sanitation dangers of tourists (Mahiranissa and Hudrasyah, 2015; Monney, Agyei and Owusu, 2013; Rahman, Arif, Bakar and bt Talib, 2016). In spite of the fact that convenient, time-saving and economical street food is perceived as a less healthy food choice. Numerous tourists are worried that, with its high level of fat, salt and usually high in calories, consuming too much street food might cause heart disease, diabetes and obesity (Al-Hazzaa et al., 2014; Polas et al., 2019). As tourist's demand for sound healthy food is growing street food vendors which give healthy food options get enhanced tourist perceived value, perceived evaluation, satisfaction with respect to the food (du Plessis, 2016). Thus, we hypothesize that,

H4: Tourist perception mediates the relationship between product quality and tourist satisfaction.

H5: Tourist perception mediates the relationship between hygiene & ambiance and tourist satisfaction.

H6: Tourist perception mediates the relationship between service quality and tourist satisfaction.

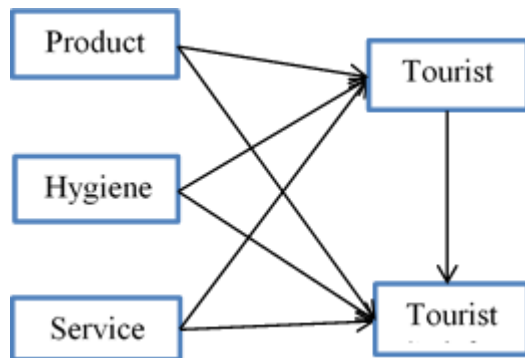


Figure 1: The Framework of the study

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Using the survey method, the researchers collected data in this study. The survey was conducted among international tourists consuming street food at Jalan Alor in Kuala Lumpur and George Town at Penang in Malaysia. In this study, the questionnaire was the main instrument which consists of twenty-one. The first four questions was to measure the signified control variables, namely gender, age, marital status, monthly income and next seventeen questions are used to measure independent, mediator and dependent variable, namely product quality, hygiene & ambiance, service quality as independent variable, tourist perception as mediator and tourist satisfaction as dependent variable. As a measurement range, the Five-point Likert scale is used for seventeen questions (1-17, Section B). The first four questions (demographic related) have been used as close ended questions. In this study, to analysis the primary data Smart pls 3.0 software has been used following the quantitative method.

3.1 Measurement

In this study, the response option for all items range from 1= highly disagreed to 5 = highly agreed. As a measurement range, Five-point Likert scale (with 1 = highly disagreed, 2 = disagreed, 3 = neutral, 4 = agreed, 5 = highly agreed) was applied. Moreover, three items were used to measure the product quality (*The smell of street food of Malaysia is charming, Fresh ingredients are only used for cooking in the street food stalls, and The food supplied by hawker's are nutritious and healthy*).

The cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.722. After that, three items were used to measure hygiene & ambiance (*Hawkers are neat and well dressed in appearance, Food served are in hygienic manner, and Colours and Lighting of the wall creates a pleasant atmosphere*). Here, the cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.745. Then, three items were used to measure service quality (*The street food stall vendors are friendly, Hawkers provide neat and fast services, and The hawkers behaviour creates confidence in me*). Here, the cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.701. Furthermore, four items were used to measure tourist perception (*Malaysian Street food represents local culture, Malaysian Street food has good value for money, The Street Food of Malaysia served to me is halal, and Hawkers service makes me honoured*). The cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.836. Finally, four items were used to measure tourist satisfaction (*I am overall satisfied with the product quality of street food of Malaysia, I am overall satisfied with the hygiene & ambiance issues of street food of Malaysia, I am overall satisfied by the service quality of street food of Malaysia, and I feel convenient to consume food on the street*). The cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.845.

FINDINGS

Table 1 displays the respondent's demographic profile. In this study, a sample of 313 international tourists who consumes street food at Jalan Alor, Kuala Lumpur and George Town, Penang was used for getting the study results. As found in Table 1, 57.19 percentage of respondents were male and 42.81 percentage of respondents were female. From that point onward, 10.86 percentage of respondents were between the age of 18-22 years, 31.31 percentage of respondents were between the age of 23-27 years, 30.03 percentage of respondents were between the age of 28-32 years, 14.38 percentage of respondents were between the age of 33-37 years and 13.42 percentage of respondents were 38 years or above. Besides, 53.99 percentage of respondents were single and 46.01 percentage of respondents

were married. After that, 23.96 percentage of respondent's monthly income was between 500-1000 USD, 23.64 percentage of respondents' monthly income was between 1001-2000 USD, 25.88 percentage of respondents' monthly income was between 2001-3000 USD, 23.64 percentage of respondents' monthly income was between 3001-4000 USD and 2.88 percentage of respondents' monthly income was between 4001-5000 USD.

Table 1: Respondent's Demographic Profile

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	179	57.19
Female	134	42.81
<i>Age</i>		
18-22 Years	34	10.86
23-27 Years	98	31.31
28-32 Years	94	30.03

33-37 Years	45	14.38
38 Years or above	42	13.42
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Single	169	53.99
Married	144	46.01
Divorced		
Separated		
Window		
<i>Monthly Income (US Dollar)</i>		
500-1000	75	23.96
1001-2000	74	23.64
2001-3000	81	25.88
3001-4000	74	23.64
4001-5000	9	2.88
5001-6000		
Total	313	100

Table 2: Measurement of Model Assessment

Constructs	Items	Loading	AVE	CR	Alpha	R-Square
Product Quality (PQ)	PQ1	0.824	0.644	0.844	0.722	
	PQ2	0.834				
	PQ3	0.746				
Hygiene and Ambiance (HA)	HA4	0.772	0.582	0.805	0.745	
		0.843				
	HA5					
Service Quality (SQ)	HA6	0.662	0.625	0.833	0.701	
	SQ7	0.757				
	SQ8	0.805				
Tourist Perception (TP)	SQ9	0.808	0.684	0.891	0.836	0.513
	TP10	0.784				
	TP11	0.842				
Tourist Satisfaction (TS)	TP12	0.785	0.670	0.896	0.845	0.723
	TP13	0.862				
	TS14	0.871				
	TS15	0.826				
	TS16	0.754				
	TS17	0.853				

Table 2 demonstrates the measurement of model assessment where the AVE value of every variable is above 0.50 and the value of CR and Cronbachs Alpha is above 0.70 and the value of factor loadings is above 0.60 which are the suggested or accepted range. Nevertheless, R^2 indicates the

values of the variances of the endogenous variable(s). Here, tourist satisfaction is demonstrated by a large effect (0.723 or 72.3%) with independent variables. Then, tourist perception is also stated by (0.513 or 51.3%) large effect with tourist satisfaction.

Table 3: Values of correlations between the LV and square roots of the AVE values in the main diagonal in the SEM

		1	2	3	4	5
1	Hygiene and Ambiance	0.763				
2	Product Quality	0.608	0.802			
3	Service Quality	0.695	0.683	0.790		
4	Tourist Satisfaction	0.691	0.719	0.691	0.827	
5	Tourist Perception	0.555	0.659	0.454	0.676	0.819

*The diagonal are the square root of the AVE (in bold) of the latent variables and indicates the highest in any column or raw

Table 3 indicates the discriminate validity of the study. To evaluate the discriminate validity for assessing the model, Fornell-Larcker criterion was applied. Moreover, the square root of the AVE (in bold) of all variables describes the highest within a range of 0.763-0.827. In this way, it is well comprehensible that discriminant validity

is sustained between variables and accredited for this estimated model of the study.

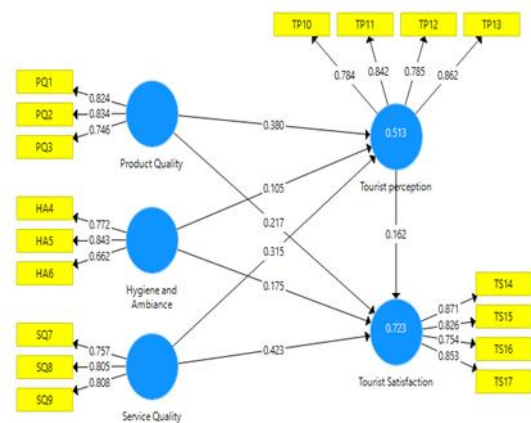


Figure 2: Standardized results of SEM calculations
Figure 2 states the structural model assessment of the study. Using the bootstrapping process with a resample 500 was also implemented to figure out the t-values and R square.

Table 4: Result of Direct and Indirect Effect Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Relationship	Std Beta	Std Error	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	Product Quality→Tourist Satisfaction	0.582	0.051	11.344	0.001	Supported
H2	Hygiene & Ambiance→Tourist Satisfaction	0.637	0.067	9.609	0.000	Supported
H3	Service Quality→Tourist Satisfaction	0.618	0.077	8.164	0.007	Supported
H4	Product Quality→Tourist Perception→Tourist Satisfaction	0.825	0.051	16.583	0.000	Supported

	Hygiene & Ambiance→Tourist	0.11	0.09		0.27	
H5	Perception→Tourist Satisfaction	8	7	1.085	8	Rejected
	Service Quality→Tourist Perception→Tourist	0.83	0.04	19.82	0.00	Supporte
H6	Satisfaction	7	3	7	1	d

Table 4 displays the result of direct and indirect effect hypotheses. Firstly, we hypothesize that there is a positive and significant relationship between product quality and tourist satisfaction. As found in Table 4, a positive and significant connection is found between product quality and tourist satisfaction ($\beta=0.582$, $t=11.344$, $p<0.001$). In this way, hypothesis 1 is acknowledged. Secondly, we hypothesize that there is a positive and significant relationship between hygiene & ambiance and tourist satisfaction. As found in Table 4, a positive and significant connection is found between hygiene & ambiance and tourist satisfaction ($\beta=0.637$, $t=9.609$, $p<0.001$). In this way, hypothesis 2 is acknowledged. Thirdly, we hypothesize that there is a positive and significant relationship between service quality and tourist satisfaction. As found in Table 4, a positive and significant connection is found between service quality and tourist satisfaction ($\beta=0.618$, $t=8.164$, $p<0.001$). In this way, hypothesis 3 is acknowledged.

Besides, fourthly, we hypothesize that tourist perception mediates the relationship between product quality and tourist satisfaction. As found in Table 4, we found that tourist perception mediates the relationship between product quality and tourist satisfaction ($\beta=0.825$, $t=16.583$, $p<0.001$). In this manner, hypothesis 4 is acknowledged. Fifthly, we hypothesize that tourist perception mediates the relationship between hygiene & ambiance and tourist satisfaction. As found in Table 4, we found that tourist perception doesn't mediate the relationship between hygiene & ambiance and tourist satisfaction ($\beta=0.118$, $t=1.085$, $p>0.05$). In this manner, hypothesis 5 is rejected. Sixthly, we hypothesize that tourist perception mediates the relationship between service quality and tourist satisfaction. As found in Table 4, we found that tourist perception mediates the relationship between

service quality and tourist satisfaction ($\beta=0.837$, $t=19.827$, $p<0.001$). In this manner, hypothesis 6 is acknowledged.

CONCLUSION

The importance of street food cannot be denied to explore the tourism sectors of any country. It helps a country to attract more international tourists. Usually, tourists visit those places again and again where the food habits and food availability are flexible. Usually, the street food provides ready-to-eat food and beverages that are sold by sellers on the streets. Tourists generally consume street food due to its low cost and take the variety of taste in the tourist's places. It also helps the tourists to make a linkage between food, place, and tourism. Once street food industry can be developed, it will ultimately attract more tourists which later influence on the enhancement of tourism.

By surveying 313 samples, this study investigated the impact of service quality, hygiene & ambiance and service quality on tourist satisfaction in Malaysia. This study also figured that tourist perception mediates the relationship between product quality and service quality with tourist satisfaction. This study claimed that tourist perception doesn't mediate the relationship between hygiene & ambiance with tourist satisfaction. The study has added to expanding knowledge in the field of tourism with regards to the developing world. The study findings deal some interesting consequences for practitioners and for further research. It provides brief explanations to service providers and policy makers regarding tourism development. It also provides how tourists can be attracted to revisit and which marketing strategies can be tailored for tourism sector. The promotional strategies should be focused more.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE STUDIES

This study also has some limitations same as other studies. This study used cross-sectional data to get the study output. The target sample was the international only. A quantitative analysis was used to get the study output. Only a survey questionnaire was used to get the data. This study only focuses on Malaysia. The future studies should be more specific. A comparative study can be conducted between two countries. A study can be conducted which focuses on the demographic related factors associated with tourists. A longitude data could be used in the future studies.

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