

Original Research

A Study of Future Prospect of Korean Cuisine in Two States of Selangor and Kuala Lumpur from Customer Decision Making Perspective

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Abstract

This study intended to fill the gap of defining four different facets pertaining to which factors consumers perceived when fulfilling their Korean food cravings. Primary factors that are directly linked with the consumer consideration when selecting the Korean restaurant are surveyed and analysed. The research results can be used by owners or managers of Korean restaurant to enhance their current performance, services, and products by transforming business strategy in accordance with consumers' preference perception. This research also enlightens managers from the different industrial sector to adopt the proposed strategies to increase the business success rate. To complete the research, a positivism quantitative research paradigm and a deductive research approach were selected. 100 sample size of consumers from Selangor and Kuala Lumpur were selected through snowball sampling. The statistical analysing method applied are one sample t-test, ANOVA and Pearson Correlation and the research variables are quality of food, customer service, menu selection, reputation, cleanliness, and ambience. This study showed that the relationship between gender and purchase intention are statistically significant however ANOVA results proved no significant value result hence the test failed to reject the null hypothesis. On the other hand, it is concluded from the findings that there is no statistical relationship between age, gender, and ethnicity while making purchase decision for any Korean restaurant in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur. The findings revealed that Malaysians have become highly interested in Korean food and generally prefer ramen, chigae, chimek and samgyupsal as their food choice. In addition, the report pointed out that among the 11 street foods, the most used term is "spicy", reflecting Malaysians' love for Korean food. Moreover, the factors perceived by customers hold greater significance for making a purchase decision for them regardless of the nature of the business.

Keywords: Korean restaurant, theory of planned behaviour, customer perception, attitude, behaviour, subjective norm

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Introduction

Customer perception is the major aspect behind the decision-making process of the consumers related to any product or service. Inegbedion, Obadiaru and Bello (2016) highlighted that if factors perceived by consumers are fulfilled by companies then they are likely to purchase from that brand. Similarly, it is required for the businesses to look for the customer preferences and factors that customers perceived while making a purchase (Taghizadeh, Rahman and Hossain, 2018). Purchase decision is based on several preferences and factors being perceived by the individuals. Most of those factors are closely related to the satisfaction criteria of consumers. As stated by Chi (2018), most of the consumers are intended to buy a product if it fulfils their desires. In the same way, Yoo (2017) also claimed that the relationship between the satisfaction of consumers and purchase decision is directly related to each other. While looking at preferences regarding food, Abdullah et al. (2018) founded that taste and quality of food matter the most. The factors perceived by consumers hold greater significance for making a purchase decision for them regardless of nature of business.

This report is based on addressing the factors that are perceived by customers while making a purchase for fulfilling their craving for Korean food. For this purpose, the people living in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur are selected. Nonetheless, the factors perceived by customer in choosing Korean restaurant are changed by their interest. In general, what business need is to find those products or services that meet their expectations including their likes, dislikes, motivations, and desires. However, the Korean restaurants that meet customer needs by defining customer preferences succeed in meeting customer satisfaction. The factors that can attract consumer towards any restaurant include quality, variety, ambience, customer service, cleanliness, etc. These are the factors that one can take into keen consideration while selecting any Korean restaurant in any region of the world.

Background of Korean Food and Beverages

Current Korean Food and Beverages Trend Worldwide

Forbes noticed that in the past 20 years, Korean flavours have changed from specialty to mainstream (Maynard, 2020). In the past two decades, the Korean wave in the world has grown steadily. Korean culture covers everything from K-pop to K-drama, Korean online games and Korean cuisine is popular worldwide (Kwon, 2020). With Bong Joon Ho's "Parasite" winning four Oscars, this wave and trend are predicted to be risen further (Schossau, 2020). In Stoke Newington, customers flock to Bake Street restaurants to enjoy instant noodles from movies only on weekends, while others make their own recipes at home. Song (2016) noticed that Kimchi appears on sandwiches, hamburgers and even ice cream. American customers are becoming more familiar with Korean cabbage-flavoured kimchi, salsa, and soy sauce. The trend of Korean kept on rising significantly (Chung et al., 2016). This can be seen from the statistics displayed below:

Table 1: Country wise Comparison of Revenue

| Ranking | Country | Revenue |
|---------|----------------|--------------|
| 1 | China | US\$152,445m |
| 2 | Japan | US\$19,111m |
| 3 | United States | US\$15,409m |
| 4 | United Kingdom | US\$8,509m |
| 5 | South Korea | US\$7,740m |

Source: Statista (2020)

Black garlic is another wonderful addition to Korean and Asian food. It is a tangy flavour that can increase the depth and complexity of vegetarian and vegan dishes without the spicy flavour of traditional white garlic. It has been used in South Korea for thousands of years, but now it is only growing in the West. The garlic bulbs are aged and fermented until they become soft, sweet, and black. According to the report of Grindell (2019), Yelp has conducted survey and reported that mouth-watering healthy alternatives such as high breakfast, non-alcoholic cocktails, Korean cuisine, and broccoli pizza all become more popular in 2020. Yelp saw user interest in Korean cuisine and barbecue in mid-2019, and the site estimates that it will continue to attract attention in 2020. In particular, Yelp was studying Korean fried rice cake Tteokbokki, which is predicted to become particularly popular in the United States and rest of the world.

Current Korean Food and Beverages Trend in Malaysia

Fifteen years ago, Malaysians were brought into the world's fastest Korean film and drama series. This has opened the door for film producers in Malaysia and hence attracted them to go for Korean cuisine. Kim and Sim (2017) noticed that the major reason behind the upsurge in consumers' positive perception about Korean food was the dramas and movies streaming in Malaysia. So far, all affection for Korean-food, fashion, beauty, movies, music, etc. has been an unwavering aspect. Malaysia and other East Asian cultures are so interested in Korean culture that many people try to take a vacation in Korea to get to know the lifestyle and food there (Lee et al., 2017; Jeon, 2019). According to data from the Korea Tourism Organisation (KTO) (2017), in the first three months of 2017, the maximum number of tourists from Malaysia reached there for the food has an increment of 14.4% from previous year's record. Since the first Korean movie landed on the coast of Malaysia, Korean food culture has penetrated the hearts of many Malaysians (Tey et al., 2018). According to a recent survey conducted by 11street, with K music, playing music and cooking, people's interest in everything in Korea (especially food) continues to grow (Malaymail, 2019). To ensure that Malaysians continue to eat Korean food, 11street strengthened the relationship with Korean Market to entice Malaysians. It is an importer and distributor of Korean products in Malaysia, providing not only Korean food to Korean buyers, but also halal food.

Within Malaysia, the revenue until 2020 based on the Korean food trends has been increased significantly. The following bar chart explains that the revenue kept on increasing and the current revenue is more than 7,000 million U.S. dollars. At the same time, the forecast tells about the upsurge in revenue stream of the Korean food and beverage.

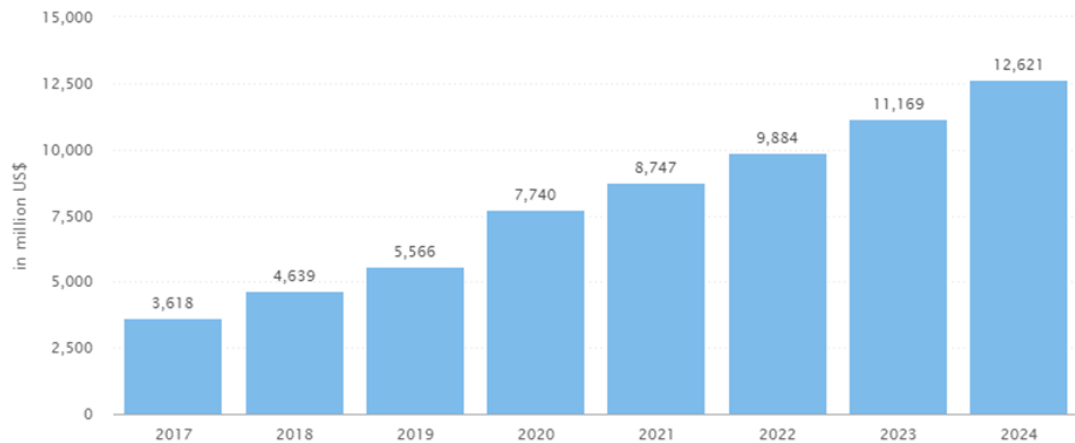


Figure 1. Revenue
 Source: Statista (2020)

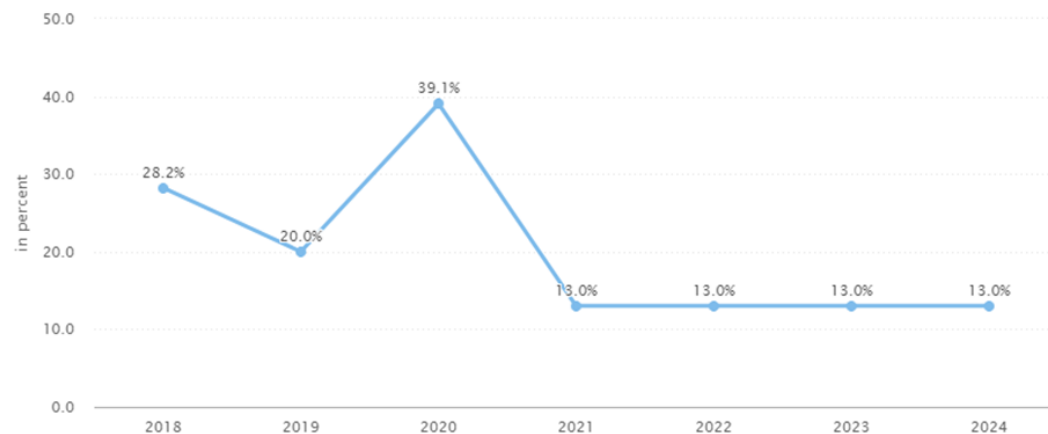


Figure 2. Revenue growth
 Source: Statista (2020)

Above graph expresses the growth in revenue of the Korean food and beverage industry. There is a highest margin marked in the growth during 2020. Nonetheless, a firm stability has been found for the rest of 4 years (2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024). Hence, it can be interpreted that people are diverting more towards spicy food and therefore, Korean cuisine is the best option for them.

To assess the trends of buying or consuming Korean foods, following chart assists in understanding the levels of income that people belong to and intended to buy them (Korean foods). As seen in the below graph 28.9% that falls under lower income households are intended to buy Korean foods. While looking at the medium ones, among them 32.6% was attracted towards the Korean food and beverage and bought them. Nonetheless, higher income families are more inclined towards Korean food and beverages. The largest portion is covered by the people having higher income levels. As

given in the graph, 38.5% of people that falls in elite class are buying Korean food to satisfy their spicy food cravings.

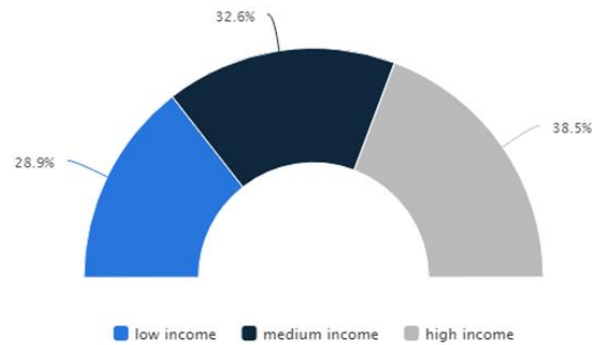


Figure 3. Users by income
 Source: Statista (2020)

To define the consumption of Korean food age wise, it can be seen from the below displayed graph that people under 44 but greater than 35 years are more attracted towards Korean cuisine. This is because 26.2% of them (35-44 years) are intended to go for Korean cuisine. At the same time, there is a minor difference observed with the age range of 45 to 54 years people. As seen, 26.9% of the people that are between 45 and 54 years, tended to buy food from Korean restaurants. This provides the evidence that most of the people that are over the age of 35 are more likely to have spicy food in their menu.

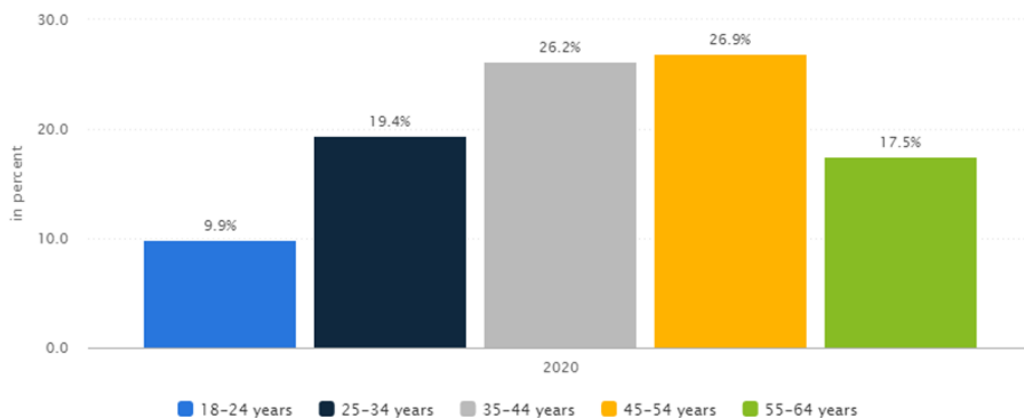


Figure 4. Users by Age
 Source: Statista (2020)

Malaysia's market attitude reflects what they have known for a long time that Malaysians like Korean food. The Sun Daily (2016) revealed that Malaysians generally prefer Korean food such as ramen, chigae, chimek and samgyupsal. In addition, the report noticed that among 11street dishes, the most used term is "spicy", which reflects Malaysians' love for hot dishes. Bruce Lim, vice president of marketing at 11street, said:

“In fact, ‘heat’ is a common ground between Malaysian and Korean foods, which is why we at 11street have ramped up our spicy Korean food offerings on our platform, to enable our shoppers to find what they love. Through this partnership with K Market, we also took this effort up a notch by introducing products that are halal so that our Muslim shoppers continue to shop with us at ease.” According to 11street, since its launch in April 2015, Korean food sales on its platform have doubled, and in 2016, the average 26-35-year-old group provided 40% of the total Korean food. Good sales and consistently high prices on 11street are happier than knowing their customers.

Research Gap

Empirical Findings

In Malaysia, people often eat hot food, from kimchi to ramen, Koreans give them a lot of spices. Research by Amaran and Wen (2018) showed that Korean movies circulating in Malaysia led to a hot food system and attracted people to incline towards Korean food. Ariffin, Bakar and Yusof (2018) emphasised that Korean movies have a great influence on Malaysians and tried to choose some of their (Korean) roles in comedies. On the other hand, in the Lee (2019) study, in this regard, some factors were found to be very important for food choices. Researchers began to study the two most important factors, namely the food and service provided by Korean restaurants. This survey shows that Malaysians are interested in the true value of this restaurant. For Korean and Malaysian style restaurants, they regard customer satisfaction as an important success. Therefore, Korean restaurants are trying to improve quality and the services to enhance the performance by attracting customers. On the other hand, Basri et al. (2016) pointed out that when choosing a restaurant, it is important to evaluate the level of service provided by the restaurant. At the same time, Kim and Bae (2017) emphasised that customer satisfaction plays an important role in any restaurant choice. Compared with the three researchers, it can be said that if the customer is satisfied with the restaurant's products and services, then he will decide to eat or lunch in the restaurant. Nonetheless, this research paper is based on understanding the perception of consumers and what they want in restaurant. This area has not been identified by most of the researcher as they emphasised more on the choices of food and flavour. Hence the research gap of observing how consumers perceive related to the selection of Korean restaurants, is fulfilled.

Literature Review

Theory of Planned Behaviour

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is considered as the extension or alternative of ‘theory of reasoned action’ (Hagger, 2019). TPB is a reliable and scalable system that can explain the customer's intention to purchase green products (Jovanov, Cabuleva and Mitreva, 2020). La Barbera and Ajzen (2020) believes that the planned behaviour model has two main components: "attitude" and "subjective norm". Consumer behaviour is related to behavioural beliefs determined through analysis results. This means that the behaviour may be a positive aspect, or it may be a negative of the person's behaviour. Therefore, good intentions will lead the buyer to buy one form of product or another. In psychology, the concept of behavioural psychology (TPB) is a theory related to beliefs

and human behaviour. The theory involves behaviour and its themes, as well as identifying behaviour management, verbally expressing and shaping people's intentions and behaviours. Icek Ajzen (1985) agrees with this idea to improve the predictive ability of actions perceived by consumers, including behaviour management (Wan, Shen and Choi, 2017). It has been included in the study of the relationship between beliefs, practices, ethical goals and behaviours in various fields to assess how consumers or customers react to any certain service or product.

Icek Ajzen (1985) proposed the theory of planned behaviour that is a policy from his study and research on the consumer perceptions (Ajzen, 2020). This theory was developed by the logical theory co-authored by Martin Fishbein. The theory is based on different theories related to human (consumers) attitude and behaviour, such as expectation value theory, learning theory, attribution theory, etc. Taufique and Vaithianathan (2018) reported that the theory of planned behaviour is playful in obtaining consumers' perception by reading their mind and addressing their experiences.

People have been arguing about the huge relationship between different kinds of intended, namely behavioural and actual. This is because the results of some studies show that due to extreme circumstances, actual intention, or motivation to buy any entity does not lead to real behaviour (Lin and Roberts, 2020; Yu et al., 2018). In other words, since behavioural intentions cannot be the only determinant of incomplete individual behaviour, Ajzen (2020) introduced behavioural psychology by introducing a new element named 'perceived behavioural control'. To this end, it has expanded its logical framework to cover up unreasonable behaviour to define realistic and behavioural motivations to buy or make a purchase decision.

The third factor recently added is behaviour management, which refers to the degree to which people think they control certain behaviours. Psychological theory suggests that when people think they can do well, they may intend to engage in certain behaviours. The observed increase in behaviour management is a combination of two aspects: self-efficacy and control. Self-efficacy refers to the degree of difficulty required to perform personal actions or beliefs and their ability to perform actions. Controlling control refers to external factors and a person's beliefs that they have self-control and behavioural performance, or whether external factors cannot be controlled. If a person can understand high-level behaviour management, then they have more confidence in performing clear behaviours. Azjen and his teammate Martin Fishbein changed and revised this theory to make it meaningful, as seen in the figure below:

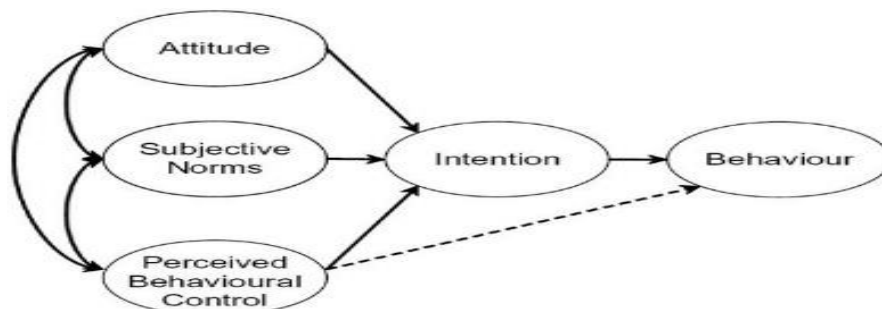


Figure 5. Theory of Planned Behaviour
Source: Kan and Fabrigar (2017)

In addition to self-goals and values (constituted logic method), the strategic planning process also includes the concept of behaviour management, which derived from self-efficacy. According to Chiu et al. (2016), expectations such as motivation, performance, and frustration associated with repeated failures determine impact and response to the purchase intention. Bandura divides expectations into two categories: self-efficacy and expected results. Lee and Lina (2018) described self-efficacy as the belief and practice needed to produce good results. Expected norms refer to human plans and certain actions that will lead to certain results. He claimed that self-efficacy is the most important factor in behaviour change, and it determines the beginning of coping behaviour. Previous research has shown that confidence in their behavioural abilities has a profound impact on people's behaviour. As describing different aspects of beliefs, behaviours, motivations, and activities, self-efficacy has been included in health-related fields, such as sports and mental health, and adolescence in sports.

Research Framework

Since the factors perceived by customers is also known as the consumer preferences; therefore, the theory of consumer behaviour can be applied here. This is because consumer preference is one of the most important aspects of consumer behaviour. Theory of planned behaviour is based on defining several factors that have impacted the intention of making a purchase. The model can be illustrated in the given framework:

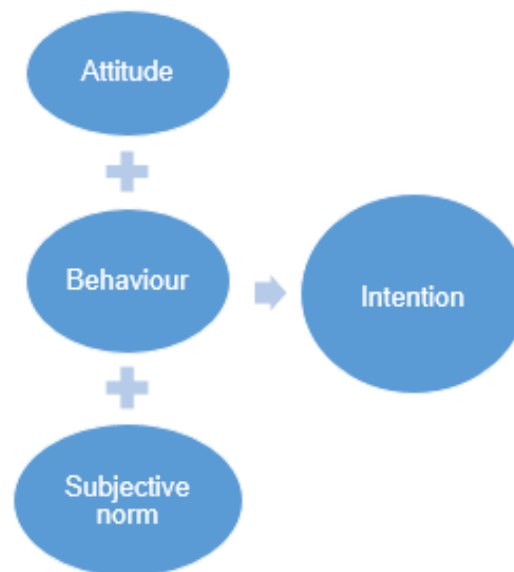


Figure 6. Planned Behaviour Framework
 Source: Self-made

Research Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis: There is no statistical relationship of gender, age, and ethnicity with decision-making process for Korean restaurants in Malaysia.

Alternative Hypothesis: There is a statistical relationship of gender, age, and ethnicity with decision-making process for Korean restaurants in Malaysia.

Research Methodology

The research methodology is a bunch of research methods that are decided by the researcher concerning the topic selected for the study. The research methods are designed to obtain useful insights related to the aims and objectives that have been decided in the initial stage of the study. In this section, the appropriate research methods are provided along with justification and their relevance to the selected topic of the research. This research is based on understanding the consumers' perception of the selecting Korean restaurant for the people living in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, Malaysia. The selection of research strategies and approaches are selected accordingly.

Research Approach and Paradigm

Research approaches are considered as a plan and procedures involving a range of suitable methods that can analyse the data efficiently. While research paradigm tells how the data needs to be interpreted. Three most research paradigms are positivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism. The selection between these three paradigms are based on nature of the research. Since this research is based on understanding the consumer perception; therefore, the researcher selected quantitative method. For quantitative, the best suited research paradigm is positivism.

Nonetheless, Opie (2019) enlightened that research approaches are divided into two unlike kinds, namely deductive and inductive. Deductive suits the quantitative research study, whereas inductive, is for the qualitative research study. With the help of the deductive approach, researchers have the privilege to collect relevant information and convert the information into numerals. In addition to it, the deductive approach also uses a hypothesis and starts the analysis by generalizing the situation (Embry and Johannessen, 2017). In the last step, the results are explicitly assessed and applied to a specific scenario. While looking at the inductive approach, the case is entirely inverse. In the current research, the factors perceived by consumers for selecting Korean restaurant in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur needs to be calculated. For this, the researcher opted a deductive approach and the information related to their perceptions was found from quantitative techniques. Therefore, the deductive approach suited the situation well.

Research Strategies

Research strategies are considered as the main actions needed to be applied to any research for reaching valuable results. As per Goodell, Stage and Cooke (2016), research strategies guide the researcher to complete the research entirely and effectively. Apt selection of research strategy assists the researcher to address the problem correctly and draw valuable conclusions. It provides a path for the researcher through which he/she can traverse to reach the primary goal of the study. It starts firstly from defining the nature of the study selected for answering the research question. For this, two options are available, either qualitative or quantitative. However, these two methods can also be used at once and then named as mixed method approach for conducting research. Next is the selection of how data should be collected either by primary means or by fetching secondary information. Subsequently, the selection of relevant variables is next on the list and then analysing techniques are defined.

If the study is quantitative, then before heading towards analysis options, one needs to define the sample size to be considered. While looking at the current scenario, the researcher opted quantitative nature of the study and the variables selected include quality of food, customer service, menu selection, restaurant reputation, cleanliness, and ambience. These variables worked as the factors perceived by the consumers for selecting any Korean restaurant to fulfil their Korean food needs in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. While looking at the nature of data collection, the primary method was selected. However, the data collection method is discussed keenly under the section of 'data collection'. Next in research strategy is the sample size, which is 100 samples of the consumers in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. At the same time, the analysing techniques used by the researcher are statistical methods. To answer all the research questions that are designed in the first chapter, following are the tests to be applied on the collected data for better interpretation of how a consumer perceives about the selection of Korean restaurants.

T-Test for Gender

The selection of t-test was based on addressing the mean difference within the selected groups to address whether they are significantly different from one another (Gerald, 2018). This helped the researcher to address any relationship between gender and consumer perception about the Korean restaurant selection.

One-Way ANOVA for Ethnic Group, Monthly Income and Age Group

ANOVA is used to compare more than two means of different groups (Kim, 2017). Therefore, three different variables were selected here to evaluate the mean difference among the selected variables that are ethnicity, income, and age.

Pearson Correlation Analysis for Age Group

Correlation analysis is the best method for addressing any statistical relationship between two or more variables (Wang et al. 2020). However, for more than two, multiple correlation is used. Here, the researcher applied linear correlation to understand the relationship between age groups and their perception about selecting Korean restaurant within Selangor and Kuala Lumpur.

Sampling Methods

Sampling methods or techniques are the base of any primary research (Taherdoost, 2016). Before heading to collect the data, it is obligatory for the researcher to select an appropriate method to sample the selected population. Here the population of Kuala Lumpur and Selangor was selected by the research, and the sample size defined by the researcher was 100 participants from both the areas. The age group of the participants in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor is between 25 to 45 years old. Therefore, the best way to sample the participants was to implement non-probability sampling. However, sampling can be done through probability or non-probability sampling, which provides equal and unequal opportunities to each participant in the sample, respectively (Etikan and Bala, 2017). In this research, the researcher selected snowball sampling from the group of non-probability sampling. As said by Naderifar, Goli and Ghaljaie (2017), snowball

sampling is time convenient; this can assist in research for meeting the deadlines. By keeping this in mind, the researcher applied snowball sampling to sample 100 participants from both the cities of Malaysia. Nonetheless, the data should be obtained through online means, which is discussed in the latter section here.

Data Collection

Collecting the data and relevant information to the topic and research aim is one of the major tasks for any researcher. If the collection of data is done appropriately, then it speaks for the authentication of the entire research study. Data collection has two different kinds, the research may have to obtain information from primary means, or he/she may opt for secondary research by studying previous research. Xie et al. (2016) defined that primary data is the first handed data and can be more valuable for research studies, as it explores new information. On the other hand, Paradis et al. (2016) claimed that the process of primary data collection is time consuming and expensive as well. While looking at the concept of secondary data, it is considered to use the same data as used by the previous researcher, along with proper citations and giving credit to the previous researcher(s). Generally, secondary data collection best suited for the evidence-based reports and primary data is considered more valuable for completing a research report. Since this research is based on addressing the consumer perception related to the selection of Korean food restaurant, it would be beneficial for the researcher to gather new and unused information. Because of using first handed data, the research can explore those aspects that have never been touched by any researchers previously. This brings a sense of uniqueness in the current research. Therefore, the researcher used primary means of data collection and collected the data from 100 participants in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor and the research instrument of the online survey questionnaire was used.

Research Design

The research design can also be considered as the nature of the study that has been opted by the researcher for meeting the core goals and objectives of the research. Leavy (2017) claimed that the research design could be of two kinds, namely qualitative and quantitative. Nonetheless, these two designs can be combined and used at the same time, which makes the research design as mixed. Most of the researchers are intended to use qualitative research design because of two reasons. Firstly, it is easier than analysing numbers, and secondly, it covers almost all the aspect through proper explanation of theoretical facets. At the same time, Rahi (2017) argued that qualitative research design requires a lot more time than quantitative ones. Therefore, it is suggested to use a quantitative approach for the research that need to be completed within a shorter time. Also, Bloomfield and Fisher (2019) claimed that instead of qualitative, quantitative research explores more valuable outcomes through proper evaluation in the form of figures. By keeping all these in mind, the researcher decided to use quantitative research design for completing this research. With the help of quantitative research design, the researcher has an opportunity to quantify the effects of factors perceived by consumers on the selection of Korean restaurants within the selected area of study (that are Kuala Lumpur and Selangor).

Research Framework

The research framework of the study is based on understanding the critical factors of Malaysians while making a choice for Korean restaurant selection. Moreover, the research was focused on how age, gender, income group, and ethnicity impacted their behaviour of selecting a Korean restaurant in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur. The variables for the understanding intention of selecting any restaurant selected by the researcher were quality of food, customer service, menu selection, restaurant reputation, cleanliness, and ambience. The entire scenario can be best explained by below defined research framework that was followed by the researcher to address the problem efficiently.

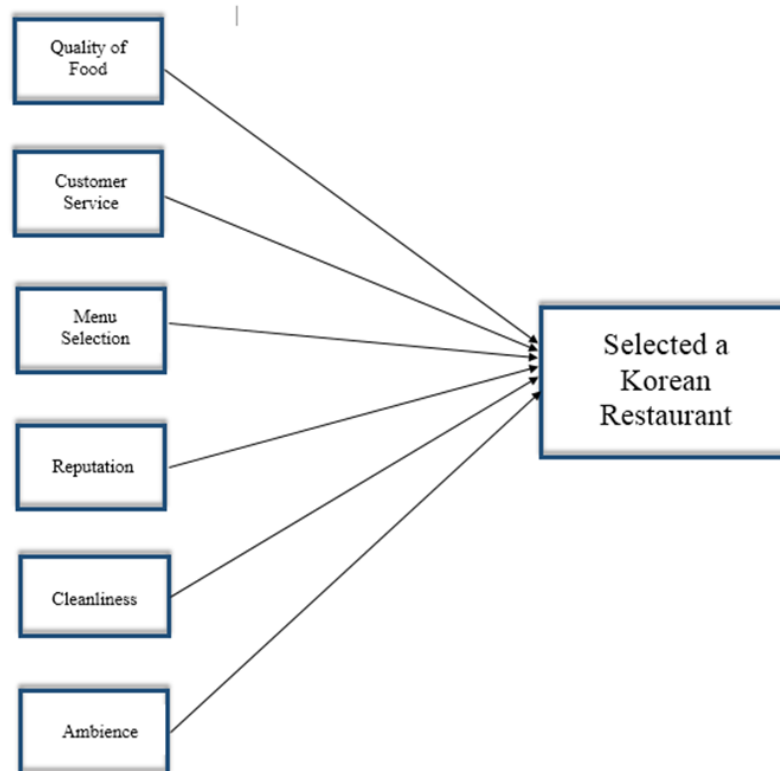


Figure 7. Research Framework
Source: Self-made

Research Ethics

In any research, ethical consideration needs to be taken on priority to maintain the authenticity of the study (Battiste, 2016). The main elements of research ethics include the proper implementation of research conducting techniques and not violating any of these tactics. For example, if the research is based on secondary analysis, none of the researchers' findings should be copied. Also, the researcher should cite the information obtained through secondary means. On the other hand, for the primary research's, it is obligated for the researcher to manage the confidentiality of the information shared by the selected sample. This piece of research is quantitative, and applied data collection method was primary sources. For fetching primary information, the researcher prepared

an informed consent form that was followed by the survey questionnaire. Each time the participants provided the survey sheet, the informed consent form was attached and forwarded to them within it. The form was filled prior to answering the survey questions. While looking at the data protection, the researcher followed the Data Protection Act and signed the consent form of not sharing any of the information shared by the participant. In addition, personal data protection was also confirmed by the researcher by signing a consent form that he/she keep the confidentiality of their personal information as well.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity of the research is based on the efficiency of the results. These measures are used to assess the quality of research, where the reliability explains consistency, whereas validity provides an accuracy of the research. The researcher measured reliability through test-retest, which is based on testing the same measures again to confirm the results. On the other hand, the validity of the research is addressed by applying relevant theories related to consumer perception. For this, the researcher applied a theory of planned behaviour. These tests are applied to check for the reliability and validity of the research, Pilot Test, Test-retest Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha Test. Validity of the research is based on measuring the accuracy of the research whether or not succeeded in meeting the research aim. Four validity tests include, content validity, construct validity, criterion validity and face validity. In this research content validity is selected by using pilot testing and another criterion validity is tested by using test retest.

Results and Findings

Descriptive Analysis

Next page shows the descriptive statistics associated with all the selected variables to answer the research questions.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Variance |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|--------|----------------|----------|
| Quality of food affected your decision-making choice for a Korean restaurant | 100 | 4.2100 | .74257 | .551 |
| Menu Selection affected your decision-making choice for a Korean restaurant | 100 | 3.8700 | .94980 | .902 |
| Restaurant reputation affected your decision-making choice for a Korean restaurant | 100 | 3.9100 | .80522 | .648 |
| Restaurant Cleanliness affected your decision-making choice for a Korean restaurant | 100 | 4.1500 | .70173 | .492 |
| Restaurant Ambience affected your decision-making choice for a Korean restaurant | 100 | 4.0200 | .75183 | .565 |

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Variance |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|--------|----------------|----------|
| Price & Value affected your decision-making choice for a Korean restaurant | 100 | 4.1100 | .73711 | .543 |
| Variety of food influences your choice of going to Korean Restaurant? | 100 | 3.9800 | .84063 | .707 |
| Level of service provided by the Korean restaurant triggers your attention towards that restaurant. | 100 | 4.0900 | .80522 | .648 |
| Age Group | 100 | 2.7000 | .87039 | .758 |
| Ethnicity | 100 | 1.8600 | .72502 | .526 |
| Gender | 100 | .5000 | .50252 | .253 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 100 | | | |

Mean, variance and standard deviation are used to assess the nature of data. Since the responses were based on the Likert scale from 1 to 5, where 1 indicated strongly disagree and 5 is for strongly agree; therefore, the mean values are interpreted according to these responses. It can be seen from the above table that for all the variables, starting from quality control to level of service consumers receive, the average is close to 5. This indicates that the average participants from 100 respondents were in favor of these factors as most influential for making a choice among Korean restaurants. The data is collected based on respondents' choices related to the Korean restaurants; the main aspect taken into consideration was their satisfaction levels. Nonetheless, they were provided with 5 different options, which can assess the intensity of their satisfaction. For example, if any of them marked strongly agree, it provides evidence for the fact that they are strictly in favor of this facet. On the other hand, if any of them selected 'agree' this indicates their slight inclination and towards the restaurant because of the selected or given factor. However, all the 100 respondents answer each question related to the influential factors for the selection of Korean restaurants in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor.

Demographic Information

This section provides information about the distribution of sample in terms of demographic characteristics. The distribution of dataset in terms of demographics is done by three different aspects. These aspects include age group, ethnicity, and gender. Here, pie chart is used for defining the proportion of age groups, ethnicity, and gender. Following is the output displayed on the SPSS, which is interpreted for defining the demographic characteristic of the data.

Table 3. Demographic Characteristics

| | | Age Group | Ethnicity | Gender |
|---|---------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| N | Valid | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | Missing | 0 | 0 | 0 |

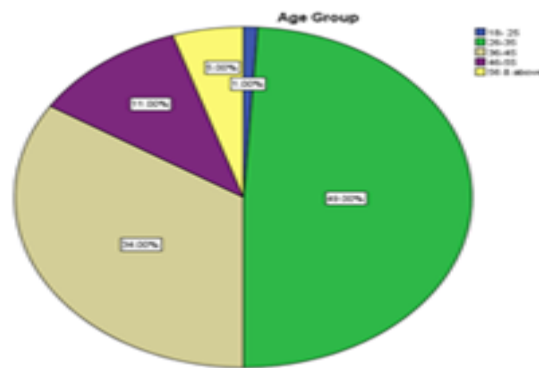


Figure 3. Pie Chart for Age Group

For the age group, the data has considered five different groups, 18 – 25, 26 – 35, 36 – 45, and 56 – above. The proportion of each age group can be seen in the pie chart displayed above.

It can be seen from the above distribution that the dataset is comprised of mixed people that belongs to all the selected age groups. However, most of them falls within the group of 26 to 35 years. Therefore, it can be interpreted that the dataset is mainly based on the viewpoints of younger adults. As seen in the pie chart, approximately half of the dataset is comprised of young adults, falling within the age bracket of 26 to 35. However, the second age group on which the sample is based are the people falling within the age range of 36 to 45. These are the adults and comprising of 34% of the total of sample size. This means that 34 out of 100 people were adults and 49 out of 100 were younger adults. On the other hand, only 11% was between 46 and 55, 5% is 56+ and only one person was under 25.

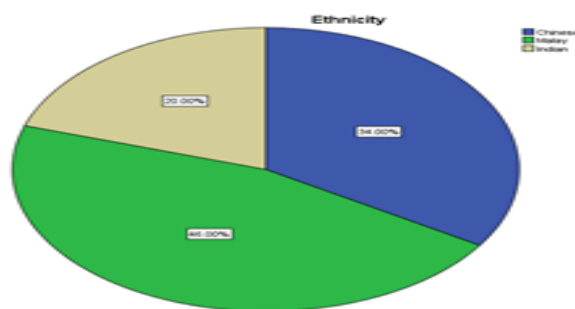


Figure 9. Pie Chart for Ethnicity

The proportion of race and ethnicity is done based on four different races namely, Chinese, Malay, Indian and others. A mixed response was observed from the survey where most of the participants were Malay. The proportion of Chinese were 34%, which is the second largest majority in Selangor, Kuala Lumpur. While the presence of Malay respondents was 46% that is the highest proportion in the selected sample of 100 people. However, the data distribution on ethnic basis was 20% based on Indian people. In this way, it shows that the data has most of the people that are native. Malays were in greater quantity while Indians are less in population for the survey. Along with this, there were

no other ethnic group or race present in the sample size of 100 people that are different from these three ethnic groups.

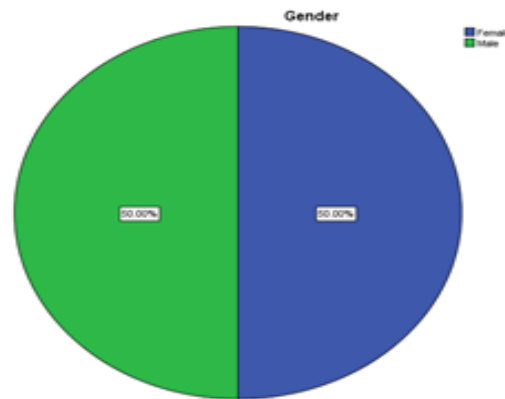


Figure 10: Pie Chart for Gender

The gender distribution of the data set can be seen from the above displayed pie chart, which is based on defining proportion of how the genders are taken into consideration for this survey. Since the pie chart revealed an equal distribution of gender; therefore, it can be interpreted that the researcher has provided equal chances to the people regardless of gender. It also speaks for the support provided to the people in terms of dealing with genders.

Study Framework Findings

Study framework was based on analysing the preferences and their impact on the decision-making process of the consumers for Korean restaurants. Since the factors perceived by customers is also known as the consumer preferences; therefore, the theory of planned behaviour can be applied here. This is because consumer preference is one of the most important aspects of consumer behaviour. Theory of planned behaviour is based on defining several factors that have impacted the intention of making a purchase. The model is illustrated as follows:



Figure 4. Planned Behaviour Framework
 Source: Self-made

The distribution of the factors as per theory of planned behaviour is done below:

Attitude – quality of food and menu selection.

Behaviour – customer service and cleanliness.

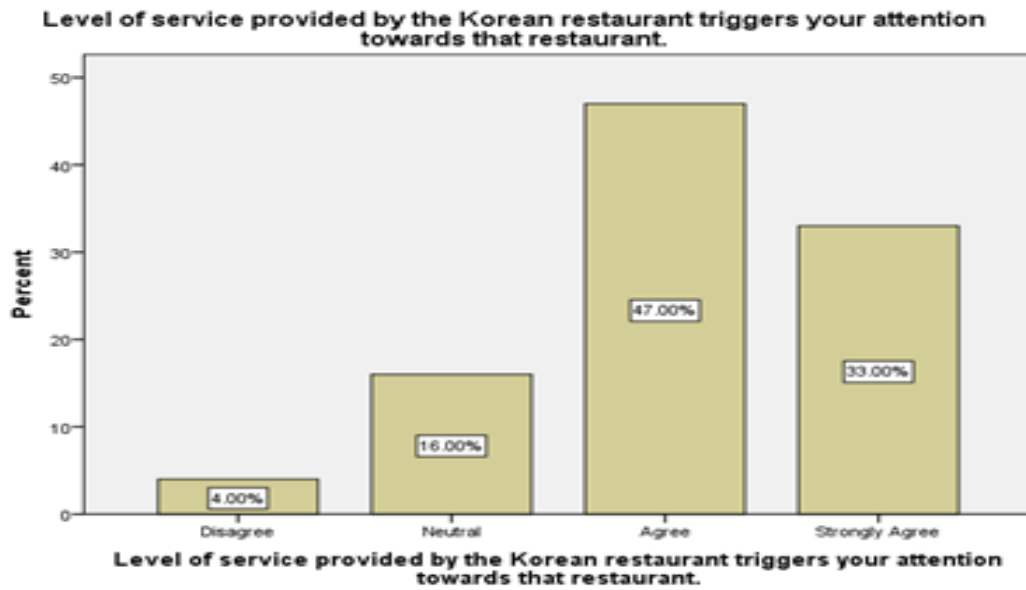
Subjective Norm – reputation and ambience.

With the help of frequency, the data related components can be best identified. The graphical analysis of each of these consumer preferences are done in the current section:



Figure 5. Quality of Food

The data proportion of 52% agreed that quality of food triggers their attention towards any Korean restaurant.



The data proportion of 47% agreed that level of service they receive triggers their attention towards any Korean restaurant.



Figure 7. Menu Selection

The data proportion of 45% agreed that menu selection affects their attention towards any Korean restaurant.

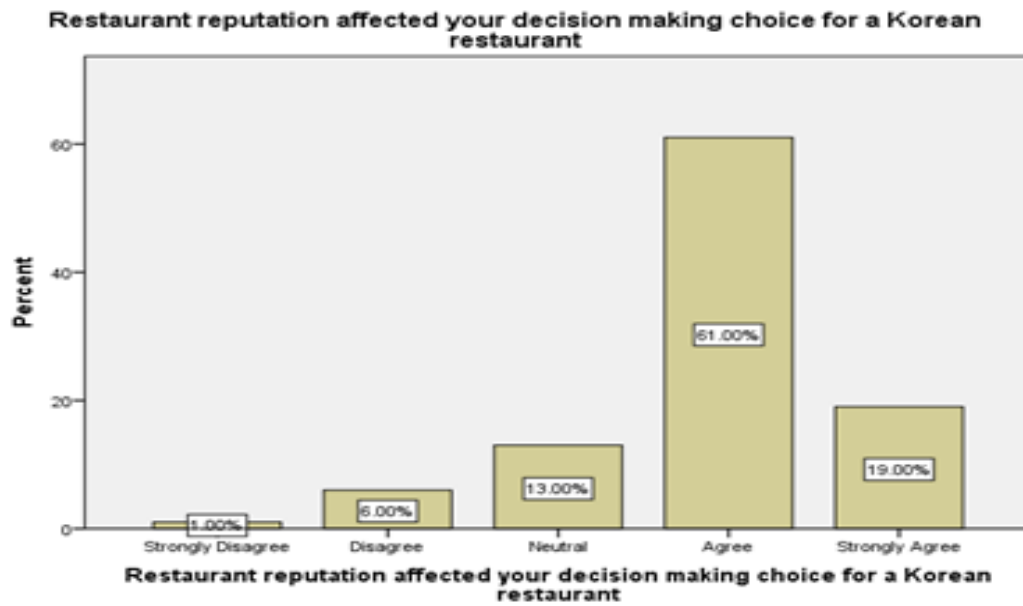


Figure 8. Reputation

The data proportion of 61% agreed that restaurant reputation triggers their attention towards any Korean restaurant.

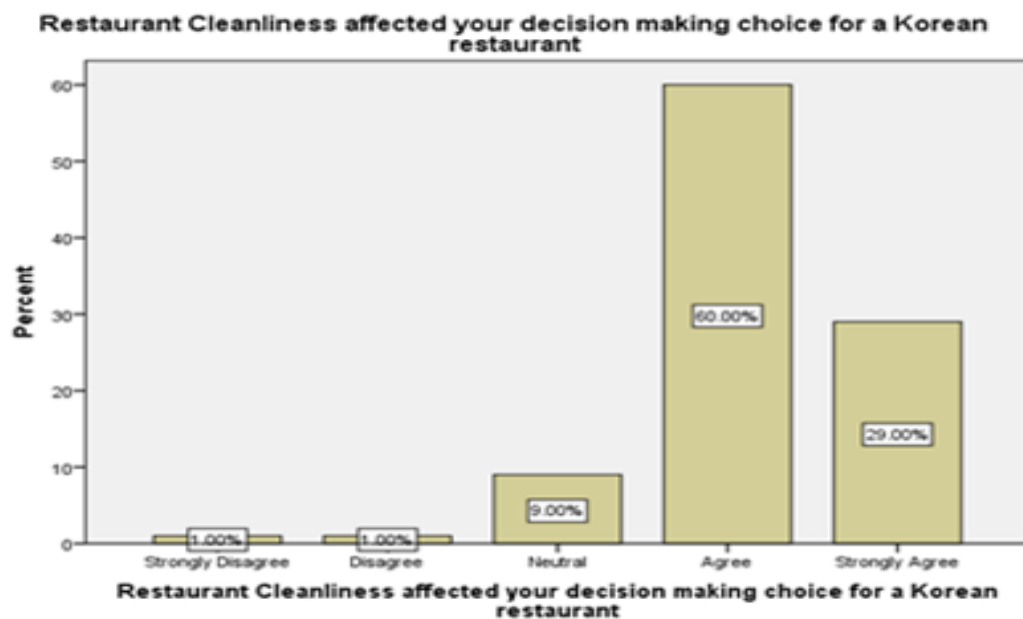


Figure 9. Cleanliness

The data proportion of 60% agreed that restaurant cleanliness triggers their attention towards any Korean restaurant.



Figure 10. Ambience

The data proportion of 55% agreed that restaurant ambience triggers their attention towards any Korean restaurant.

Reliability and Validity Test Results

Pilot Test by Frequency Analysis

Pilot testing is based on addressing the data distribution and to evaluate the responses that can design the nature of dataset. This test is also used to address the content validity of the research. In the following section, frequency distribution is provided in terms of relative frequency. The output of frequency analysis on SPSS is displayed below:

Table 4. Quality of Food

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 1 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| | Disagree | 1 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2.0 |
| | Neutral | 10 | 10.0 | 10.0 | 12.0 |
| | Agree | 52 | 52.0 | 52.0 | 64.0 |
| | Strongly Agree | 36 | 36.0 | 36.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The data proportion of 52% agreed that quality of food triggers their attention towards any Korean restaurant.

Table 5. Menu Selection

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 3 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 |
| | Disagree | 4 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 7.0 |
| | Neutral | 22 | 22.0 | 22.0 | 29.0 |
| | Agree | 45 | 45.0 | 45.0 | 74.0 |
| | Strongly Agree | 26 | 26.0 | 26.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The data proportion of 45% agreed that menu selection affects their attention towards any Korean restaurant.

Table 6. Reputation

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 1 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| | Disagree | 6 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 7.0 |
| | Neutral | 13 | 13.0 | 13.0 | 20.0 |
| | Agree | 61 | 61.0 | 61.0 | 81.0 |
| | Strongly Agree | 19 | 19.0 | 19.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The data proportion of 61% agreed that restaurant reputation triggers their attention towards any Korean restaurant.

Table 7. Restaurant Cleanliness

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 1 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| | Disagree | 1 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2.0 |
| | Neutral | 9 | 9.0 | 9.0 | 11.0 |
| | Agree | 60 | 60.0 | 60.0 | 71.0 |
| | Strongly Agree | 29 | 29.0 | 29.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The data proportion of 60% agreed that restaurant cleanliness triggers their attention towards any Korean restaurant.

Table 8. Restaurant Ambience

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 1 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| | Disagree | 1 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2.0 |
| | Neutral | 18 | 18.0 | 18.0 | 20.0 |
| | Agree | 55 | 55.0 | 55.0 | 75.0 |
| | Strongly Agree | 25 | 25.0 | 25.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The data proportion of 55% agreed that restaurant ambience triggers their attention towards any Korean restaurant.

Table 9. Price and Value

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Disagree | 3 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 |
| | Neutral | 13 | 13.0 | 13.0 | 16.0 |
| | Agree | 54 | 54.0 | 54.0 | 70.0 |
| | Strongly Agree | 30 | 30.0 | 30.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The data proportion of 55% agreed that price and value of the restaurant triggers their attention towards any Korean restaurant.

Table 10. Variety of Food

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 1 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| | Disagree | 4 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 5.0 |
| | Neutral | 18 | 18.0 | 18.0 | 23.0 |
| | Agree | 50 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 73.0 |
| | Strongly Agree | 27 | 27.0 | 27.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The variety of food presented in the restaurants triggers the attention of 50% consumers towards the selection of that restaurant for fulfilling their Korean cuisine craving.

Table 11. Level of Service

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Disagree | 4 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 4.0 |
| | Neutral | 16 | 16.0 | 16.0 | 20.0 |
| | Agree | 47 | 47.0 | 47.0 | 67.0 |
| | Strongly Agree | 33 | 33.0 | 33.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The data proportion of 47% agreed that level of service they receive triggers their attention towards any Korean restaurant.

Test-Retest Reliability

This test is associated with the reliability of data and criterion validity of the study. For the test-retest reliability, correlation matrix has been taken into consideration, which is based on defining the significance value associated with each of the variables that are being considered in the study.

Table 12. Test-Retest Reliability

| | | Quality of Food | Menu Selection | Reputation | Restaurant Cleanliness | Restaurant Ambience | Price and Value | Variety of Food |
|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|------------|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Quality of Food | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .039 | .049 | .288** | .137 | .253* | -.042 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .699 | .630 | .004 | .174 | .011 | .680 |
| | N | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Menu Selection | Pearson Correlation | .039 | 1 | .249* | -.001 | .202* | .208* | .199* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .699 | | .013 | .994 | .044 | .038 | .047 |
| | N | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Reputation | Pearson Correlation | .049 | .249* | 1 | .078 | .287** | .238* | .191 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .630 | .013 | | .442 | .004 | .017 | .057 |
| | N | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Restaurant Cleanliness | Pearson Correlation | .288** | -.001 | .078 | 1 | .052 | .124 | -.115 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .004 | .994 | .442 | | .610 | .219 | .256 |
| | N | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Restaurant Ambience | Pearson Correlation | .137 | .202* | .287** | .052 | 1 | .124 | .192 |

| | | Quality of Food | Menu Selection | Reputation | Restaurant Cleanliness | Restaurant Ambience | Price and Value | Variety of Food |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|------------|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .174 | .044 | .004 | .610 | | .221 | .055 |
| | N | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Price and Value | Pearson Correlation | .253* | .208* | .238* | .124 | .124 | 1 | .248* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .011 | .038 | .017 | .219 | .221 | | .013 |
| | N | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Variety of Food | Pearson Correlation | -.042 | .199* | .191 | -.115 | .192 | .248* | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .680 | .047 | .057 | .256 | .055 | .013 | |
| | N | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). | | | | | | | | |
| *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). | | | | | | | | |

Table 12 explained that restaurant cleanliness is significant at 0.01 level with the two tailed distribution whereas price and value is significant at 0.05 level with a two tailed distribution.

Cronbach's Alpha Test

Table 13. Cronbach's Alpha Test

| Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|------------------|------------|
| .489 | 11 |

The Cronbach's alpha is near to 0.5, which indicates the acceptable level of reliability of data. While looking at the variables, it shows that on excluding the variable of ethnicity, the reliability of the dataset will be increased.

The reliability test confirmed the acceptance of dataset at two tailed distribution. Moreover, the acceptable value of Cronbach's Alpha resulted acceptance of dataset.

Google Questionnaire Results

For the questionnaire results, the qualitative information involved in question 1 and 2 are ignored because of insufficient responses. Only 44 people responded to question 2 and 25 of the participants responded to the 1st question. Since the response rate for these two questions were not enough to be included in the study; therefore, it has been excluded. Exclusion of these question cannot affect the overall research because the main objective of this research is to assess the customer perception and that can be evaluated through rest of the questions in the questionnaire.

Quality of food affected your decision making choice for a Korean restaurant
 100 responses

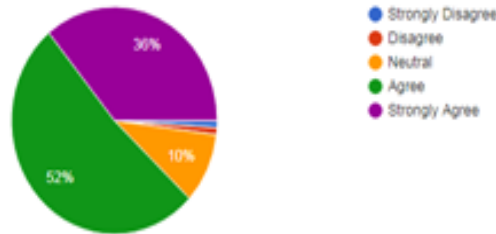


Figure 18. Quality of Food

It can be seen from the pie chart that 36% of the participants strongly agreed the fact that quality of food affected their decision-making choice for a Korean restaurant. While looking at the negative side, only few of them disagreed that are negligible and failed to show proportion in the results displayed by the google forms.

Menu Selection affected your decision making choice for a Korean restaurant
 100 responses

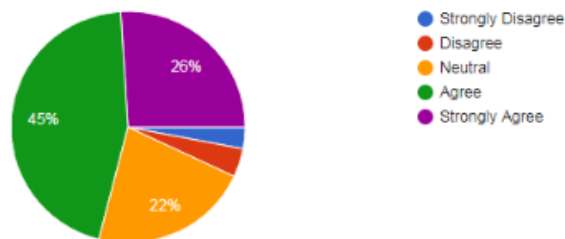


Figure 19. Menu Selection

It can be seen from the pie chart that 26% of the participants strongly agreed the fact that menu selection affected their decision-making choice for a Korean restaurant. While looking at the negative side, only few of them disagreed that are negligible and failed to show proportion in the results displayed by the google forms. On the other hand, 22% of them were neutral at this aspect.

Restaurant reputation affected your decision making choice for a Korean restaurant
 100 responses

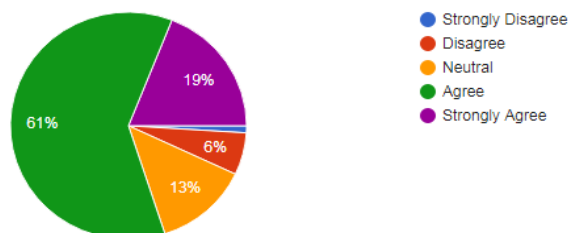


Figure 20. Restaurant Reputation

It can be seen from the pie chart that 61% of the participants agreed the fact that restaurant reputation affected their decision-making choice for a Korean restaurant. On the other hand, 19% of them strongly agreed for the restaurant reputation that worked potentially for making a purchase decision. However, 13% were neutral about the restaurant reputation.

Restaurant Cleanliness affected your decision making choice for a Korean restaurant
 100 responses

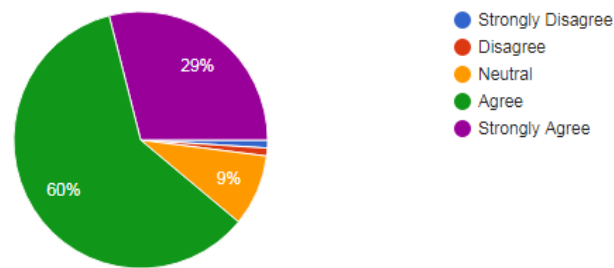


Figure 21. Cleanliness

As from the pie chart, 60% of the participants agreed the fact cleanliness of the restaurant has a direct and significant effect on their decision-making choice for a Korean restaurant. However, 29% of them strongly agreed for the factor of restaurant cleanliness. While looking at the negative side, only few of them disagreed that are negligible and failed to show proportion in the results displayed by the google forms.

Restaurant Ambience affected your decision making choice for a Korean restaurant
 100 responses

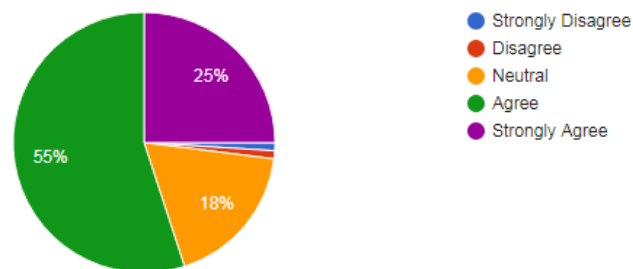


Figure 22. Ambience

It can be seen from the pie chart that 25% of the participants strongly agreed the fact that ambience of restaurant affected their decision-making choice for a Korean restaurant. While looking at the negative side, only few of them disagreed that are negligible and failed to show proportion in the results displayed by the google forms.

Price & Value affected your decision making choice for a Korean restaurant
 100 responses

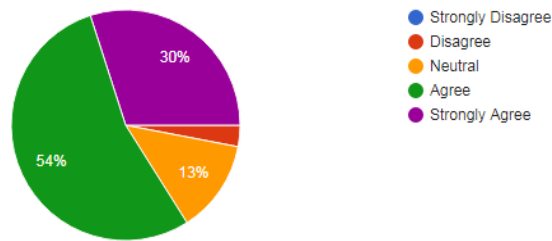


Figure 23. Price and Value

Here, 30% of the participants strongly agreed the fact that price and value of the restaurant affected their decision-making choice for a Korean restaurant. Nonetheless, 54% of them agreed at this aspect that price and value matter a lot for them.

Variety of food influences your choice of going to Korean Restaurant?
 100 responses

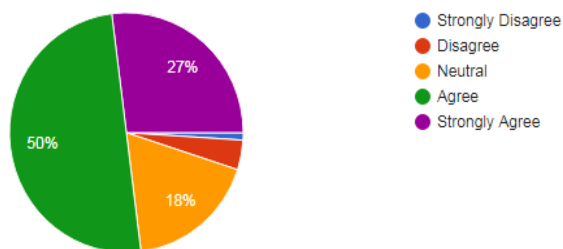


Figure 24. Variety of Food

It can be seen from the pie chart that 27% of the participants strongly agreed the fact that the variety of food offered by the restaurants affected their decision-making choice for consuming Korean food. While looking at the negative side, only few of them disagreed that are negligible and failed to show proportion in the results displayed by the google forms.

Level of service provided by the Korean restaurant triggers your attention towards that restaurant.
 100 responses

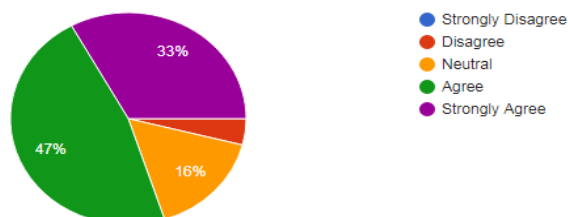


Figure 25. Level of Service

It can be seen from the pie chart that 33% of them strongly agreed the fact that level of service they receive from restaurant's end has a significant effect on their decision-making choice for a Korean restaurant. While looking at the negative side, only few of them disagreed that are negligible and failed to show proportion in the results displayed by the google forms.

Research Analysis

Graphical Analysis

The distribution of the factors as per theory of planned behaviour is done below:

Attitude – quality of food and menu selection.

Behaviour – customer service and cleanliness.

Subjective Norm – reputation and ambience.

With the help of frequency, the data related components can be best identified. The graphical analysis of each of these consumer preferences are done in the current section:



Figure 26. Quality of Food

The data proportion of 52% agreed that quality of food triggers their attention towards any Korean restaurant. The results indicated that the roleplay of quality of food and consumer preference is significant. As seen from the graph, 36% of them were strongly in favor of this aspect. However, this finding has also been concluded by the research done by Lee (2019), which indicated that quality of food is one of the highest priorities that are considered necessary for purchase intention.



Figure 27. Customer Service

The data proportion of 47% agreed that level of service they receive triggers their attention towards any Korean restaurant. While 33% of them were strongly in favor of the facet of level of service. Basri et al. (2016) pointed out that when choosing a restaurant, it is important to evaluate the level of service provided by the restaurant. Hence these findings collide with the research study concluded by Kim and Bae (2017), which emphasized that customer satisfaction plays an important role in any restaurant choice. Nonetheless, the service consumers receive from restaurant's end is the key player for measuring the level of satisfaction. Therefore, it can be interpreted that if the restaurant's customer service is up to the mark then consumers are more inclined to visit the same restaurant for fulfilling their Korean food cravings.

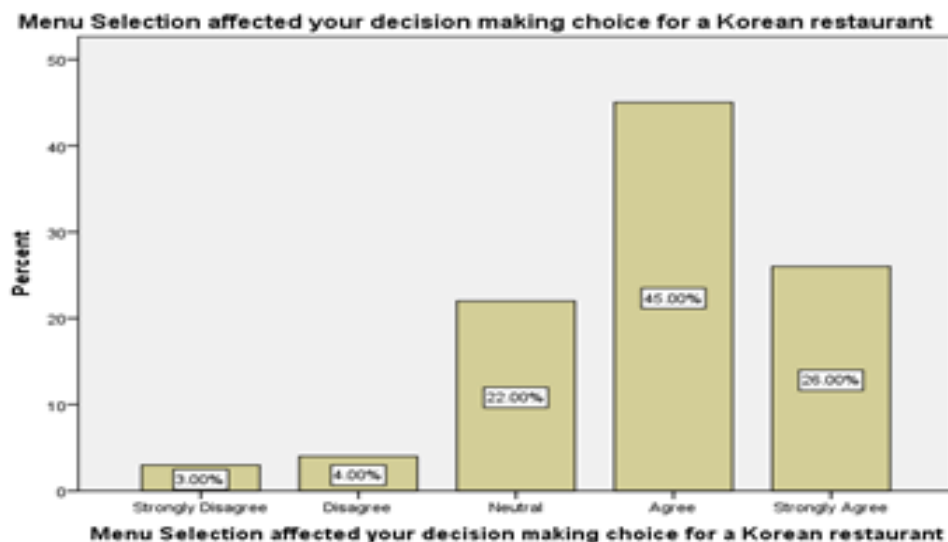


Figure 28. Menu Selection

The data proportion of 45% agreed that menu selection affects their attention towards any Korean restaurant. However, 26% of them strongly in favor of the fact that if they have a good menu provided by the restaurant then they are more likely to visit the same restaurant for meeting their Korean food desires. Nevertheless, menu selection is one of the major factors associated with the customer satisfaction. As said by Kim and Bae (2017), customer satisfaction is one of the major aspects to be considered while making a purchase decision.

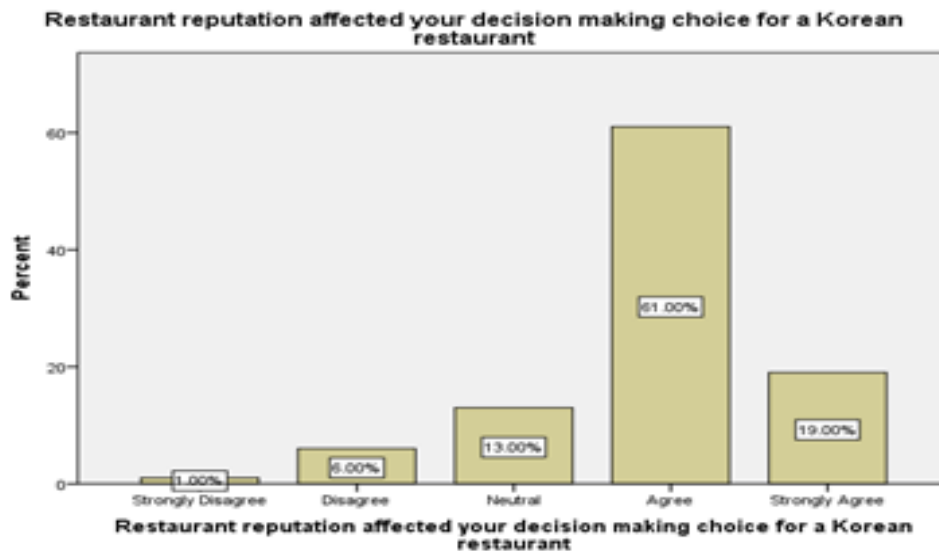


Figure 29. Reputation

The data proportion of 61% agreed that restaurant reputation triggers their attention towards any Korean restaurant. On the other hand, only 6% of them disagreed at this facet where restaurant reputation worked less importantly for the selection of any Korean restaurant. While looking at the positive aspect, an amount of 19% of them were strongly in favor of the fact that if restaurant has maintained its reputation and succeeded in maintaining market competitiveness then consumers are more inclined towards the restaurant. In the same way, these findings are in line with the conclusion made by Grindell (2019) that indicates about the relationship between consumer preference and decision-making process. Nonetheless, restaurant reputation holds greater importance for the selection of Korean restaurant.

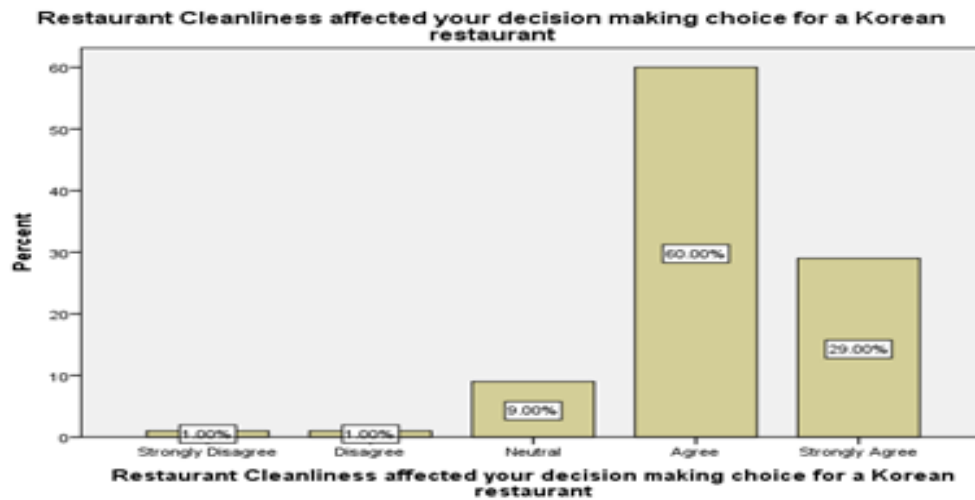


Figure 30. Cleanliness

The data proportion of 60% agreed that restaurant cleanliness triggers their attention towards any Korean restaurant. Restaurant cleanliness is another important factor that can trigger the consumer attention. The results indicated that the cleanliness and environment of restaurant holds greater significance for the selection of Korean restaurant. People were asked to draw their conclusion on the basis of cleanliness, and more than half of them supported the fact that if restaurants are clean and tidy then they are intended to select for that particular restaurant in comparison with the rest. These findings collide with the conclusion made by Whitley, Trudel and Kurt (2018), which claimed about the importance of customer preferences and perceptions for making a purchase decision. One of the main factors or customer preferences is clean and tidy environment. People are inclined towards any restaurant because of environment.

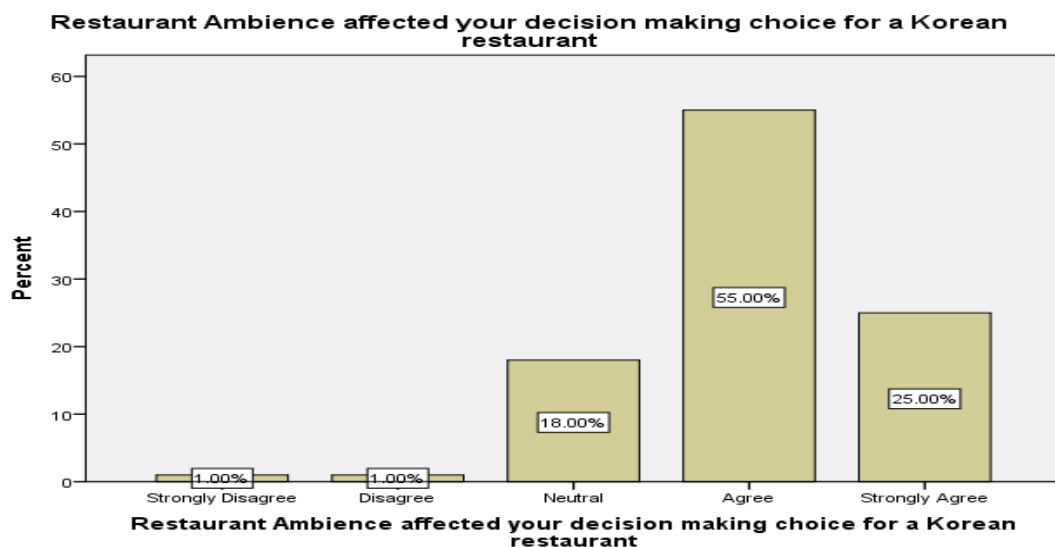


Figure 31. Ambience

The data proportion of 55% agreed that restaurant ambience triggers their attention towards any Korean restaurant. However, 25% of them strongly agreed the fact that restaurant ambience worked positively for triggering the attention of consumers towards the selection of Korean restaurant.

Reliability Statistic Analysis

Pilot Test by Frequency Analysis

Pilot testing is based on addressing the data distribution and to evaluate the responses that can design the nature of dataset. In the following section, frequency distribution is provided in terms of relative frequency. The output of frequency analysis on SPSS is displayed below:

Table 14. Quality of Food

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 1 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| | Disagree | 1 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2.0 |
| | Neutral | 10 | 10.0 | 10.0 | 12.0 |
| | Agree | 52 | 52.0 | 52.0 | 64.0 |
| | Strongly Agree | 36 | 36.0 | 36.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The data proportion of 52% agreed that quality of food triggers their attention towards any Korean restaurant.

Table 15. Menu Selection

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 3 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 |
| | Disagree | 4 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 7.0 |
| | Neutral | 22 | 22.0 | 22.0 | 29.0 |
| | Agree | 45 | 45.0 | 45.0 | 74.0 |
| | Strongly Agree | 26 | 26.0 | 26.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The data proportion of 45% agreed that menu selection affects their attention towards any Korean restaurant.

Table 16. Reputation

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 1 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| | Disagree | 6 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 7.0 |
| | Neutral | 13 | 13.0 | 13.0 | 20.0 |
| | Agree | 61 | 61.0 | 61.0 | 81.0 |
| | Strongly Agree | 19 | 19.0 | 19.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The data proportion of 61% agreed that restaurant reputation triggers their attention towards any Korean restaurant.

Table 17. Restaurant Cleanliness

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 1 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| | Disagree | 1 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2.0 |
| | Neutral | 9 | 9.0 | 9.0 | 11.0 |
| | Agree | 60 | 60.0 | 60.0 | 71.0 |
| | Strongly Agree | 29 | 29.0 | 29.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The data proportion of 60% agreed that restaurant cleanliness triggers their attention towards any Korean restaurant.

Table 18. Restaurant Ambience

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 1 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| | Disagree | 1 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2.0 |
| | Neutral | 18 | 18.0 | 18.0 | 20.0 |
| | Agree | 55 | 55.0 | 55.0 | 75.0 |
| | Strongly Agree | 25 | 25.0 | 25.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The data proportion of 55% agreed that restaurant ambience triggers their attention towards any Korean restaurant.

Table 19. Price and Value

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Disagree | 3 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 |
| | Neutral | 13 | 13.0 | 13.0 | 16.0 |
| | Agree | 54 | 54.0 | 54.0 | 70.0 |
| | Strongly Agree | 30 | 30.0 | 30.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The data proportion of 55% agreed that price and value of the restaurant triggers their attention towards any Korean restaurant.

Table 20. Variety of Food

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 1 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| | Disagree | 4 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 5.0 |
| | Neutral | 18 | 18.0 | 18.0 | 23.0 |
| | Agree | 50 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 73.0 |
| | Strongly Agree | 27 | 27.0 | 27.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The variety of food presented in the restaurants triggers the attention of 50% consumers towards the selection of that restaurant for fulfilling their Korean cuisine craving.

Table 21. Level of Service

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Disagree | 4 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 4.0 |
| | Neutral | 16 | 16.0 | 16.0 | 20.0 |
| | Agree | 47 | 47.0 | 47.0 | 67.0 |
| | Strongly Agree | 33 | 33.0 | 33.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The data proportion of 47% agreed that level of service they receive triggers their attention towards any Korean restaurant.

Test-Retest Reliability

This test is associated with the reliability of data and criterion validity of the study. For the test-retest reliability, correlation matrix has been taken into consideration, which is based on defining the significance value associated with each of the variables that are being considered in the study.

Table 22. Test-Retest Reliability

| | | Quality of Food | Menu Selection | Reputation | Restaurant Cleanliness | Restaurant Ambience | Price and Value | Variety of Food |
|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|------------|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Quality of food | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .039 | .049 | .288** | .137 | .253* | -.042 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .699 | .630 | .004 | .174 | .011 | .680 |
| | N | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

The above table explained that restaurant cleanliness is significant at 0.01 level with the two tailed distribution whereas price and value is significant at 0.05 level with a two tailed distribution. This revealed that people are more attracted towards the restaurants that are tidy and clean (Kim and Bachman, 2019). Also, Raji and Zainal (2017) claimed that the price and value offered by the restaurants are considered on priority for the selection of any restaurant.

Cronbach's Alpha Test

Table 23. Cronbach's Alpha Test

| Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|------------------|------------|
| .489 | 11 |

The Cronbach's alpha is near to 0.5, which indicates the acceptable level of reliability of data. While looking at the variables, it shows that excluding the variable of ethnicity, the reliability of the dataset will be increased. This explains the fact that the dataset used in this research is partially reliable and its reliability can be enhanced by increasing the sample size. Since there is a limitation of budget and time; therefore, the researcher cannot add more samples to it. Moreover, the limitation of covid-19 and lockdown situation is also a limitation that hinders primary data collection.

Inferential Statistics

One Sample t-test for Gender and Purchase Intention

Table 24. One-Sample Test

| | Test Value = 0 | | | | | |
|------------------|----------------|----|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------|--------|
| | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Gender Intention | 9.950 | 99 | .000 | .50000 | .4003 | .5997 |
| | 96.587 | 99 | .000 | 3.52875 | 3.4563 | 3.6012 |

As per the significance values of t statistic, the relationship between gender and purchase intention founded to be statistically significant.

One Way ANOVA for Gender, Ethnicity and Age Group

This section will test the hypothesis set in the second chapter of this study. Restating the hypothesis:

Null Hypothesis: There is no statistical relationship of gender, age, and ethnicity with decision-making process for Korean restaurants in Malaysia.

Alternative Hypothesis: There is a statistical relationship of gender, age, and ethnicity with decision-making process for Korean restaurants in Malaysia.

To test the hypothesis, following output is given:

Table 25. ANOVA

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-----------|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|------|
| Ethnicity | Between Groups | 7.484 | 13 | .576 | 1.111 | .361 |
| | Within Groups | 44.556 | 86 | .518 | | |
| | Total | 52.040 | 99 | | | |
| Gender | Between Groups | 3.061 | 13 | .235 | .923 | .533 |
| | Within Groups | 21.939 | 86 | .255 | | |
| | Total | 25.000 | 99 | | | |
| Age Group | Between Groups | 7.249 | 13 | .558 | .708 | .751 |
| | Within Groups | 67.751 | 86 | .788 | | |
| | Total | 75.000 | 99 | | | |

As seen from the significance value, none of them were statistically significant. This speaks for the fact that people's age, gender, and ethnicity do not matter while selecting for Korean restaurant. Hence null hypothesis is failed to be rejected and not enough evidence was found to claim about the statistical significance of age, gender, and

ethnicity.

The results of ANOVA are interpreted by looking at the associated p-values for each of the selected variables. None of the values result are significant, and hence the test failed to reject the null hypothesis. It is concluded from the results that there is no strong relationship between age, gender, and ethnicity while making purchase decision for any Korean restaurants.

Pearson Correlation for Age and Purchase Intention

Table 26. Pearson Correlation

| | | Age Group | Intention |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Age Group | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .000 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .997 |
| Intention | Pearson Correlation | .000 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .997 | |
| a. Listwise N=100 | | | |

The relationship between these two variables found out to be highly significant as well as strongly correlated. This indicates that the age group matters a lot while selecting the Korean restaurants. This is interpreted because of the 99.7% strongly correlated with the age group and purchase intention.

Conclusion

The study reflects that the overall perception of customers is a key part of their buying behaviour. Moreover, the research also pointed out that businesses need to look at customer reviews and what customers perceive while buying certain products or services. The statement is based on the description of the understanding that customers in Malaysia look for their cultural values and attributes while purchasing certain products. The residents of Selangor and Kuala Lumpur were selected.

Malaysians often like to choose hot food; therefore, Korean food is one of their best choice (Nahar et al., 2018). The report mainly discussed the importance of gaining customer interest and understanding their purchase making decisions. Moreover, this study is based on the customers' descriptions when choosing Korean restaurants. The purpose of this study was to clarify the issues that Malaysian customers particularly Selangor and Kuala Lumpur customers consider while choosing Korean cuisine. Apart from this, the purpose of the study is also to determine whether these choices vary with age, income, gender, and race.

Customers' feelings and preferences in choosing a Korean restaurant tend to change from time to time. The customers' thoughts, and decision in choosing Korean restaurants also affected by the market trends happening in Malaysia. Therefore, a Korean restaurant needs to find a technique to meet its customers' expectations which includes likes,

dislikes, motivations, and expectations. Those Korean restaurants that meet customers' defined needs can satisfy customers effectively. The factors that can attract customers to any restaurant include quality, variety, atmosphere, customer service, and hygiene. These are the things to consider when choosing a Korean restaurant in any part of the world. This research allows restaurant owners to understand the basic knowledge that customers know when choosing Korean food. In addition, this survey will help restaurant owners identify the main ingredients and customers favourite locations to dine Korean cuisine.

Moreover, the findings also revealed that consumer's perception on product or service is highly important for restaurant owners and that it changes with the dissimilarity in age, gender, income, and ethnicity. It is believed that Korean restaurants in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor should emphasise on catering the demand of customers from different gender group and age group. In addition, the report also revealed that currently Korean restaurants in Malaysia are facing certain issues of understanding the demand of customers. There is no specified customer feedback system which enables them to become familiar with the perception of customers towards the consumption of Korean restaurants located in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor.

Furthermore, the findings obtained says that over the past two decades, the Korean flavour has changed in the Malaysian market. The respective statement can be further proven by the fact that the Korean culture wave have continued to rise in the country. Korean culture covers everything from K-pop to K-drama and Korean computer games. In a similar way, Korean food has also gained significant value and consideration in the country as well. The result obtained from the research also revealed that Kimchi has become highly popular in Malaysian food, and it has become highly popular in sandwiches, burgers, and even ice cream. Apart from Malaysians and Koreans in Malaysian, Americans residing in Malaysia also uses Korean kimchi, salsa, and soy sauce in their food. Also, the findings obtained from the research developed an analysis of current Korean food and beverages trends in Malaysia.

Researchers mentioned that the main reason for the increase in the number of real customers of Korean food is due to the Korean films and dramas that are circulating in Malaysia. So far, all the love for Koreans: food, fashion, beauty, movies, music, etc. - is an incomparable part. Malaysia and other East Asian cultures are so interested in Korean culture that many people try to understand the Korean lifestyle and food. According to the research findings, the largest number of tourists to Malaysia who visited for Korean food recorded a 14.4% increase from the previous year's record. This mainly reflects that Korean food that is available in Malaysia attracts thousands of travelers. Hence, the Korean food industry also increases the tourism in Malaysia. This reflects that Korean restaurants have become an essential part of the Malaysian economy.

In this concern, Korean restaurants are required to assess different factors and attributes of customers to appraise how they can further enhance customer satisfaction. For instance, the result obtained from the analysis pointed that offering high-quality services, which comply with Korean culture is required to attain the attention and concentration of restaurant goers in Malaysia. In this manner, it can be stated that customer satisfaction tends to play a critical role in increasing their intent to come to the restaurant.

On the other hand, it has also been appraised that one major factor, which enforces people in Malaysia to visit the Korean restaurant is the availability of authentic Korean food taste. It reflects that Korean restaurants in Malaysia should emphasise on introduction of authentic and genuine Korean food to become successful. In addition to this, it has also been found that restaurants are indebted to focus on the inclusion of cultural values of Korea in their restaurant service as well. With the inclusion of such services, the overall attribute of the restaurants in Malaysian sector will be improved.

Apart from this, the result obtained from the research also articulates how Korean chef should be brought to Malaysia in order to train the existing waiters and chef in Malaysia to become more competent and proficient in maintaining the Korean taste in their restaurants. With incorporation of such practices and strategies, the Korean restaurants in Malaysia will be able to attain the satisfaction and appreciation of customers, and more importantly, it will help in improving the customer perception towards Korean restaurant and thus their intensity to visit such restaurants in Malaysia will elevate as well.

Implication of Study

This section of the research will mainly emphasise on evaluating the overall implication of the theoretical studies on the field of research along with the influence of the findings obtained from the research on the managerial practices as well.

Theoretical Implication

The findings obtained from the research reflected that it could be implicated to the theoretical studies as it forms a basis for the future researchers to conduct more researches on this topic of concern to assess how the customer's perception is shaped in the hospitality and restaurant industry. In addition to this, the following research also forms a foundation for other researchers to comprehend and classify how different perceptions of customers are required to be appraised to increase the business value and sustainability.

Managerial Implication

Notably, the relevance of the managerial implication of this project can be seen from selected variables and deliberated factors used for evaluating consumer perception. Moreover, the results of this project can be applied by the managers or business owners of the restaurant to alter their services and products concerning the customers' perception. In addition, this report figures out the relationship of age, gender, income, and ethnicity with the selection of Korean restaurants within Selangor and Kuala Lumpur. In this way, it is considered that managers of Korean restaurants in Malaysia can imply the respective research to understand how they can develop strategic plan to comply with customer demands and thus increase their sales in the region as well. For example, the researcher lays the basis for restaurant owners in Malaysia to comprehend that they need to integrate Korean culture in their customer service and adopt genuine Korean dishes to attract more customers in the region. Other than this, the research also enlightens that managers from the different industrial sector can also adopt the proposed strategies to make their business successful by learning approaches to comply with customer demands.

Recommendation for Business Strategy for Korean Restaurant in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur

This section of the paper will mainly emphasise on giving additional recommendation and suggestions for the strategic business plan, which Korean restaurants in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur are indebted to incorporate to become more progressive and prosperous.

At first, it is recommended that Korean restaurants functioning in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur should conduct a survey to acquire the feedback from customers to assess their perception towards the restaurants and then make necessary changes in their business plan to become more successful.

Secondly, it is considered substantial for Korean restaurants in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur to focus on the integration of real and authentic Korean culture in their services and ambience as well. The inclusion of such practices will help the restaurant is becoming more attractive, and thus people from different regions will also visit the Korean restaurants in these two cities to observe the Korean culture and services.

Thirdly, it is considered essential for the Korean restaurants in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur to emphasise the inclusion of authentic Korean dishes to attract more customers and thus present their restaurant as more genuine Korean restaurants.

Limitation

There are certain factors, determinants, and attributes that limits or confines the applicability of the research. One of the most critical limitations of this study is that it is mainly based on the quantitative survey. Hence, the absence of qualitative interviews increases the uncertainty in the research outcome. Similarly, the use of only 100 respondents in the sample depicts that such a small sample size cannot be used to assess the opinion of all Malaysian customers who visit Korean restaurants. Other than this, the research mainly focus on appraising the perception of customers towards the Korean restaurant whereas the issues and challenges, which Korean restaurants in the country experience in complying with the demands of customers are not present in the research. Hence, the lack of research on the complexities faced by Korean restaurant owners in Malaysia further limits the applicability of the research outcome.

Future Research

There is certain course of actions, which should be implicated by future researchers to increase the authenticity and applicability of the research. At first, the future researcher should increase the sample size of respondents and conduct qualitative interviews along with a quantitative survey to increase the research's credibility. In a similar way, the issues, and problems, which are commonly experienced by the Korean restaurant owners in Malaysia should also be addressed by future researchers to enhance the overall credibility and aptitude of the research findings.

Project Conclusion

The findings obtained from the research revealed that Malaysians have become highly interested in Korean food. Moreover, Malaysians generally prefer Korean food such as ramen, chigae, chimek and samgyupsal. In addition, the report pointed out that among the 11 street foods, the most used term is "spicy", reflecting Malaysians' love for Korean food. Moreover, the factors perceived by customers hold greater significance for making a purchase decision for them regardless of nature of business. The researcher has applied this aspect for assessing the factors perceived by the customers for the selection of Korean restaurants in Malaysia. Furthermore, it has also been appraised that in this project that Korean restaurants in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur are required to focus on the incorporation of real and authentic Korean culture in their food, customer services and ambience as well. In this way, it is believed that the inclusion of such practices will benefit the Korean restaurants in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur to entice people from different regions to visit the Korean restaurants in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur.

Authors' Contributions

Mr. Chee Jun Wan is the main author and research project member and the student doing the research under the supervision of Dr. Rashad Yazdanifard as the project advisor and the editor of the project.

Each author's role in the research participation must be mentioned clearly.

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