Influence of Customer Brand Personality in Hotel Restaurant and Post Behaviour Intention

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Abstract
Despite the increasing interest in the concept of brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand image, and brand competitiveness in a restaurant setting and its operational aspects, there has been very little research looking at the association of brands with hotel restaurant setting in particular. In this sense, the influence of hotel restaurant walk-in customer brand personality on their post behaviour intention has not yet holistically been investigated. With this gap, the present study empirically investigated the causal relationship between the five-star, walk-in customer brand personality and their post-purchase behaviour. In achieving the outcomes, a causal research design using a quantitative approach was used, and the walk-in customers who were patronage of the selected five-star hotel restaurants in the Klang Valley were chosen as the sample for this study. Through drop-off and collect approach adopted for the administration, 482 usable questionnaires were successfully collected. The results revealed that customer brand personality has a strong influence on the walk-in customer as well as the post-purchase behaviour intention.
Keywords: Hotel, Restaurant, Walk-in Customer, Brand Personality, Post Behaviour Intention.

Introduction
        According to Muller and Woods (1998), building a restaurant brand is a primary focus among the restaurateurs and the restaurant managers. Food quality and satisfaction act as catalysers for branding the restaurant (Nield, Kozak & LeGrys, 2000) while service quality is considered as the antecedent of customer dining experience and satisfaction is the consequence of dining experience (Ladhari, Brun, & Morales, 2008). Other scholars argued that hotel restaurant brands which govern the elements of food, services, the physical environment and other attributes act as a bundle that may not only influence customer dining experience but also create a level of satisfaction and post dining intention (Rust, Lemon & Narayandas, 2005; Paswan, Spears, & Ganesh, 2007). This notion and situation probably suit those who always choose and stay in a particular hotel as they have set their mind from the

beginning to be there probably due to affordable price, overall branding or image of the hotel including its food and beverage outlets.

This scenario, however, could be different with the walk-in customer as their decision to dine at a particular hotel restaurant may be based on many other reasons ranging from the business matter, leisure and others. Based on this, the important thing to ponder which is closely associated to this study is whether the hotel restaurant brands through the elements of food, services, the physical environment could influence the walk-in customer's decision to dine at the particular hotel restaurant. This question is also related to the Malaysian scenario, whereby a substantial number of walk-in customers are found prone to dine at the high-end restaurant (Liu & Jang, 2009). Based on the verbal interview with some of the five-star hotel restaurant managers, besides having in-house guests during normal days, their restaurants are also occupied with walk-in customers, especially during weekends.

According to Ahmad (2008), despite slightly being expensive, there is an emerging pattern observed in which the number of customers patronising at the five-star hotel restaurants in Malaysia is steadily increasing. However, this situation is only getting a substantial increase during the fasting month through the Ramadhan Iftar buffet. Ahmad (2008) further argued that Ramadhan Iftar buffet in the five-star hotel has certainly attracted many Muslim customers, and this uniqueness trend has never declined. The result of the recent study also provided an insight that Ramadhan Iftar buffet menu attributes at the five-star hotel restaurants have a significant impact on Muslim walk-in customers purchase behaviour. The food quality, menu variety and food presentation provided by these five-star rating hotel restaurants are able to create a positive inclination among the Muslim customers during the Ramadhan month (Fatah, 2016).

Besides the hotel restaurant brands, research has shown that product's brand personality influences the consumers' favouritisms by permitting them to express themselves through the brands that they use (Aaker, 1997; Keller, 1993; Siguaw, Mattila, & Austin, 1999; Temporal, 2001). A well-recognised product's brand personality can lead to the upsurge of trust, loyalty or revisit (Diamantopoulos, Smith & Grime, 2005; Fournier, 1994; Temporal, 2001). Many scholars posited that products brand personalities are considered critical to consumer purchase decision (Holden, 1992; Keller, 1993) and a vital element in strengthening the brand value (Aaker, 1991; Aaker, 1996; Biel, 1993; Keller, 1993). However, the influence of customer brand personality of the product brand has been holistically studied neither in the general marketing fields nor in the hotel and restaurant realm.

Holding to this argument, a few questions could be raised in relation to this study. How strong is the connection between customer brand personality and their intention of dining at the hotel restaurants? Looking further, can customer brand personality create repeat purchase behaviour? In other words, what are the antecedents and consequences of these scenarios?

Literature Review
Customer Brand Personality
Based on the literature, customer brand personality is commonly used as the personality trait or customer brand identity (McCracken, 1989). In this sense, Funder (1997) defined personality traits as an individual's characteristic pattern of thought, emotion and

behaviour, together with the psychological mechanisms whether it is hidden or not behind those patterns or it is the pattern where consumers express their actual or idealised self-image. According to Baumgartner (2002), personality traits mirror the customer behaviour values, actions and words on a particular brand. Baumgartner's further argued that personality traits would be able to help the brand manager in developing integrated conceptual frameworks for the purpose to understand consumers preference and behaviour, which lead to the development of better-targeted communications. For this study, instead of personality trait, the term customer brand personality is used to associate restaurant consumer behaviour with a restaurant brand. In the real situation, customer brand personality is the type of consumers that cannot discriminate themselves with something that is valued to them or something that evokes a strong emotional and cognitive attachment as a part of self-concept of an individual (Adjei & Clark, 2010; Vazquez-Carrasco & Foxall, 2006).

From previous studies, brand personality can persuade a strong symbolic value that usually describes customers (Ekinci, Sirakaya-Turk, & Preciado, 2013; Hultman, Skarmeas, Oghazi, & Beheshti, 2015). Despite not using the term customer brand personality, several previous studies have indicated a strong relationship between personality traits and consumer involvement in the business environment. Ajzen (1987) stated that personality trait is an important antecedent in explaining and predicting the behaviour of human being. Thus, the personality traits of a consumer can play a significant role that involves a particular brand through the values held by the individual. Kim, Suh, and Eves (2010) reported that personality traits or consumer personality could be associated with their beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. Mael and Ashforth (1992), on the other hand, used customer brand identity in analysing on how consumers describe their feel in term of sense of connectedness to a certain coffee shop brand and express themselves regarding that feeling. They found that coffee shop brands with strong personality traits will manifest individual personal traits by effectively reflecting the desired self-concepts of customers. In a recent study, Kim and Holland (2017) examined how customer personality traits influence brand loyalty in the coffee shop industry, and their finding constitutes that personality traits have significant effects on customer satisfaction. It is positively associated with brand loyalty.

According to Hultman (2015), consumers with high brand personality trait and preference, satisfaction and loyalty are likely less sensitive to price, and also less likely to be influenced by competitor's advances and features. Many brand managers often spend millions of dollars annually to form and sustenance the brand for a particular product or services. In contrast, the brand personality traits from the customer point of view have provided a basis for distinction resulting in different favourable behaviour s as well as portray different attitudes towards a particular brand. Based on this premise, customers tend to speak more highly of brands and repurchase those possessing favourable and distinctive features (Chi & Qu, 2008) that resonate with their personality tendencies. Hence, a customer with a positive brand image resulting from a particular brand is more likely to be loyal to their preferred brand. Several scholars contended that understanding customer brand personality and personality traits processes are vital for a brand marketer to increase a brand's performance, market share and other core functions in operating a successful business toward product or services offered by the organisation (Ahearne & Bhattacharya, 2005; Hultman et al., 2015; Lam, Ahearne, Hu, & Schillewaert, 2010). Despite this, customer brand personality has not been holistically

studied as a construct in restaurant brand ad marketing research; thus, it has little established measurement.

Post Behavioural Intention

Before touching into the post-purchase behaviour and its consequences, it better to highlight a bit on the behavioural intention, particularly on the customer perspective. Typically, the intention is conceived as a position of a consumer who deliberates about purchasing a product or brand during an anticipated time frame (Berkman & Gilson, 1986). The intention is a rendering of a consumer's attitude, confidence and anticipation about a certain purchase plan that inhibits the effect of attitude and confidence. The intention is understood as a cognitive state that reflects the consumer's plan to buy units of a particular product or brand in some specified time period (Howard & Sheth, 1969). Oliver (1997) defined behavioural intentions as an affirmed likelihood to engage in certain behaviour. It is an attitude that is strongly related to consumers' intentions to repertories a service or product. With the assumption that favourable results from consumers' internal processes in response to a product will lead to their purchase of that product (Kim & Richardson, 2003) intention has been used as a proxy measure for purchase behaviour (MacKenzie, Lutz, & Belch, 1986; Mullen & Johnson, 1990). It has also been established that behaviour is more closely related to behavioural intentions than attitudes, beliefs or feelings (Granbois & Summers, 1975; Reibstein, 1978; Warshaw, 1980).

However, the actual behaviour is often used to evaluate consumers' future or past behaviour (Ryu et al., 2008). Others claimed that actual consumers' behaviour should yield the most accurate prediction of future behaviour or post-purchase behaviour (Oliver, 1997). Based on the most popular literature, there are two main consequences of consumer post-purchase behaviour, that is: 1) intentions to repurchase and 2) recommending behaviours or word of mouth and both the consequences have been of concern for this study. In other words, favourable of the consumers or customer actual behaviour lead to the intention of repurchase and come by way of saying positive things about the service and recommending the service to others and vice versa (Boulding, Kalra, Staelin, & Zeithaml, 1993; Zeithaml et al., 1996).

Methodology

According to the Malaysian Association of Hotel (2018), more than 40 five-star hotels are available at present in the Klang Valley, and each hotel is running one or more in-house restaurants in their premise. However, only coffee house restaurant is chosen as the venue for data collection. This means that 40 five-star hotel coffee house restaurants are involved in this study. Before data collection was undertaken, the restaurant managers of all identified five-star hotel restaurants were contacted to seek permission to undertake the survey and request administrative support. At the same time, the introduction and the consent letter along with the cover letter from the university to conduct research were mailed to the respective restaurant managers. It is worth mentioning that since this study required the involvement of the customers but not disturbing their privacy with the researcher's presence while dining, the restaurant managers were requested to distribute the questionnaire through the waiters and waitresses. This means that a drop-off box and collect approach was adopted for the administration of the questionnaires.

With the purpose to achieve maximum response from the restaurant customers, the researcher reminded each hotel restaurant managers on the time span of the data collection period. The researcher personally delivered the questionnaires to the respective hotels and had a meeting with each hotel restaurant manager. The purpose of having a meeting with the hotel restaurant manager was to explain the details of instructions, procedure and how the questionnaire was to be administered by restaurant service personnel. As this study dealt with a large amount of hotel restaurant walk-in customers, it was therefore affirmed that convenience sampling is suitable as this technique is able to deal with a large number of potential respondents and provide holistic insight on issue investigated. The survey instrument was conveniently distributed through the assistance of the respective restaurant managers as from the information gathered from hotel restaurant managers, the researcher from any university was not allowed to approach the customers during dining time as it would infringe their privacy.

The restaurant managers were firstly given a briefing with regard to the objective of the survey. The waiter and waitress were requested to approach only the walk-in customers by requesting them to participate in the study during their dining period and based on the stipulated time allocated by the researcher. Out of 840 questionnaires distributed, a total of 511 questionnaires were collected from all respective hotels. The researcher managed to get 482 usable data. Table 1 illustrates the number of questionnaires distributed in the respective hotels that participated in this study.

Table 1:
The total number of identified 5-Star Hotel Restaurants

Location	No. of 5-Star Hotel Restaurants	Number of Questionnaires Distributed
Kuala Lumpur	12	21x12=252
Putrajaya	8	21x8=168
Kajang/ Bangi	3	21x3=63
Petaling Jaya	6	21x6=126
Subang Jaya	4	21x4=84
Shah Alam	4	21x4=84
Kelang	2	21x4=42
Pelabuhan Kelang	1	21x1=21
TOTAL	40	840

Source: Malaysian Association of Hotel (2018)

Result and Analysis
Characteristics of the Study Sample

With regard to gender distribution, the number of male respondents exceeded the female with 61.4 percent (n =296) against 38.6 percent (n=186). The data also revealed that the majority of respondents were between 40 to 59 years of age, which made up 45.9 percent of the total sample (n =221) followed by 60 years' old which represented 34.2 percent (n = 165). The smallest proportion of the sample or 19.9 percent (n=96) were among the 18-39 years old. This result clearly indicated that males and the middle age groups were among the walk-in customers who preferred to dine at the five-star hotel restaurant compared to females, the young and the older age groups. This in fact held true according to most of the

restaurant's managers of the five-star hotel restaurants who participated in this study. It was predicted during the question development that majority of the walk-in customers would be Malays because this ethnic represents a large proportion of the Malaysian population. This is held true as Malay respondents constituted around 48.8 percent (n=235) of the walk-in customers with 31.7 percent Chinese (n=153) and 19.5 percent Indians (n=94). Regarding the educational level and profession of the walk-in customer, the result indicated that 15 percent (n =76) of the respondents only had their secondary school education. About 48.1 percent (n=232) obtained undergraduates degree qualification while 36.1 percent (n=174) possessed the post graduate degree qualification.

Customer Brand Personality Results
It envisaged that brand personality could influence the walk-in customer's propensity of dining at the five-star hotel restaurants. This, in fact, held true in this section analysis. The magnitude of mean scores that ranged from 5.26 to 5.45 manifestly revealed that the respondents slightly agreed with most of the statements asked (Table 2).

Table 2:
Respondent's Customer Brand Personality

	N	M	S.D
I always love being in high-class restaurant environment	482	5.45	1.10
I am a particular person with regard to service delivery	482	5.41	1.05
I am willing to spend my time being in the premier restaurant environment	482	5.42	1.01
I enhance my self-image when dining at this type of restaurant	482	5.37	1.05
Dining at this hotel restaurant portrays my individual self-image	482	5.49	1.15
I feel connected with this hotel restaurant's brand	482	5.45	1.10
I always like to be with charming and attentive restaurant employees when dining out	482	5.26	1.04

The majority of walk-in customers slightly agreed that dining at the five-star hotel restaurant portrayed their individual self-image (M=5.49) and enhanced their self-image (M=5.37); thus, they always love being in a high-class restaurant environment (M=5.45). Holding to that feeling, it is surprising that they also slightly agreed they were particular with regard to service delivery (M=5.41), feel connected during their visit (M=5.45), and being with charming and attentive restaurant employees (M=5.26); hence, they were willing to spend time in the premier restaurant's environment (M=5.42). What could be presumed from this result is that brand personality of the walk-in customer does have an influence on five-star hotel restaurant and acts as a medium for expressing their brand personality when dining out at the five-star hotel restaurant.

Repurchase Behaviours
The mean scores in Table 3 revealed a consistent outcome for repurchasing behaviour construct, which ranged between 5.52 to 5.69. In other words, the walk-in customers who dine at the five-star hotel restaurant agreed with all the items used to measure their repurchase behaviour.

Table 3:
Repurchase Behaviour

	N	M	S.D
I will consider five-star hotel restaurants as my first choice for the next visit.	482	5.56	1.06
I will patronise five-star hotel restaurants more often in the future.	482	5.69	1.19
I strongly felt that the excellent service provided deserves me another visit.	482	5.52	1.17
I have no hesitation in dining out again at these five-star hotel restaurants	482	5.60	.87
I strongly felt that the excellent food provided deserves me another visit.	482	5.59	1.01

Most of the walk-in customers agreed that they will consider the five-star hotel restaurants as their first choice for the next visit (M=5. 56) and are willing to patronise in five-star hotel restaurants more often in the future (M=5. 69); thus, there is no hesitation to dine out again at the five-star hotel restaurants (M=5. 60). In line with this notion, the walk-in customers also agreed they strongly felt due to good service (M=5. 52) and good food and service (M=5. 59) were provided by the five-star hotel restaurant. What could be said from this finding is that the walk-in customers had a positive repurchase behaviour towards five-star hotel restaurant.

Conclusion
To this end, this empirical study achieved its overall goal or successfully provided a further understanding on the connection between the five-star hotel restaurant brand attributes and brand personality on the walk-in customers brand personality and the consequence of the post behaviour intention. The results do create not only new documentation and strengthening the restaurant customer behaviour, but also provide fundamental basis and platform for other researchers to look and expand into a much broader scope particularly concerning high-end restaurant branding and customer brand personality.

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