UNIVERSITY OF SURREY

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FOOD QUALITY,
SERVICE QUALITY, PERCEIVED VALUE-FOR-MONEY,
DESIRES-CONGRUENCE AND SELF-CONGRUENCE ON
CONSUMER SATISFACTION AND IN TURN LEAD
TO BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS AND CONSUMERS'
POST-PURCHASE ATTITUDE IN THE
RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

SITI NURAFIFAH JAAFAR

2010

UNIVERSITY OF SURREY

School of Management

The Relationships between Food Quality, Service Quality, Perceived Value-for-Money, Desires-congruence and Self-congruence on Consumer Satisfaction and In Turn Lead to Behavioural Intentions and Consumers' Post-purchase Attitude in the Restaurant Industry

By

SITI NURAFIFAH JAAFAR

A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2010

ABSTRACT

Review of customer-satisfaction studies in restaurants (1980s-2009) shows that very little emphasis is placed on food, the core product in restaurants. At transaction-specific level, most studies examine service attributes rather than food-related attributes. At overall satisfaction level, most studies examine SERVQUAL dimensions which do not include an item related to food. It is also noted that the measurement of antecedents and consequences of consumer satisfaction are imbalance with most studies focusing on measuring certain variables, whilst neglecting others. For instance, service quality (antecedent) and intention to return (consequence) have frequently been examined in the past compared to other variables such as desires-congruence (antecedent) and intention to switch (consequence). This study is therefore aimed to examine the extent to which 'food quality', in the presence of other variables [i.e. service quality (staff behavior), service quality (environmental quality), perceived value-for-money, desires-congruence and self-congruence], influence consumer satisfaction and in turn lead to behavioural intentions (i.e. 'intention to return', 'intention to recommend' and 'intention to switch') and consumers' post-purchase attitude in the restaurant industry, through an extended version of consumer satisfaction model adapted from Ekinci et al (2008).

The specific objectives of this research are: 1) to examine the elements of restaurants in terms of influencing consumers' eating-out experience in restaurants; 2) to explore consumers' view on 'food quality', in relation to restaurants' dining; 3) to test the extended model of 'consumer satisfaction' adapted from Ekinci et al. (2008); 4) to examine the effect of 'food quality', 'service quality', 'desires-congruence', 'self-congruence', 'perceived value-for-money' on 'consumer satisfaction'; 5) to investigate the effect of 'consumer satisfaction' on 'consumers' behavioural intentions' and 'post-purchase attitude towards the service firm'; and 6) to determine the path through which 'food quality', 'service quality', 'desires-congruence', 'self-congruence', 'perceived value-for-money' influence 'consumer satisfaction' and whether 'consumer satisfaction' mediates the link between these variables and 'consumers' behavioural intentions' and 'post-purchase attitude towards the service firm'. Two data-collection methods were used to achieve these objectives. Face-to-face interviews were conducted to explore factors that influence eating-out experience and to understand consumers' opinion on the quality characteristics of food in restaurants. Surveys were carried out to investigate the relationships between 'food quality' and other variables (e.g. service quality, perceived value-for-money) on consumer satisfaction, behavioural intentions and post-purchase attitude towards restaurants.

Content analysis was used to analyse qualitative data. The findings of the interviews suggested four themes that influence consumer eating-out experience: (1) service delivery, (2) food, (3) environment and (4) price/value-for-money, that supports the literature that 'food', 'service delivery', 'environment', 'price' and 'value-for-money' are the common aspects influencing consumers' eating-out experience. Also, the quality characteristics

of food addressed were 'taste', 'freshness', 'appearance', 'accuracy of meal to the consumers' expectation', 'how properly the food is cooked', 'portion size', 'smell', 'fat content in food', 'authenticity of food' and 'temperature of food'. These results of interviews were used to develop food-quality measurements and modify the existing measurements for service quality which are adapted from Ekinci et al. (2008). These measurements were used in the quantitative research – survey by means of questionnaires.

Survey was carried out in a town in the South East of England. Initially, questionnaires were administered face-to-face before mail questionnaire administration took place due to a low response rate (n=38) in the first approach. 301 usable questionnaires obtained were subjected to data analyses, including descriptive statistics analysis, normality test of data, factor analysis, correlation analysis, reliability test, regression analysis and comparison of means analysis.

Results demonstrated that a significant relationship was found between 'ideal self-congruence', 'desires-congruence', 'perceptions of service quality (staff behaviour)', 'perceived value-for-money' and consumer satisfaction. Food quality and service quality (environmental), however, were insignificant in predicting consumer satisfaction. Consumer satisfaction had an influence on 'consumers' post-purchase attitude' and 'behavioural intentions' in restaurants. Results also support the important role of consumer satisfaction as mediating variable between the antecedents variables ('food quality', 'service quality', 'perceived value-for-money', 'desires-congruence' and 'ideal self-congruence') and 'intention to return', 'intention to recommend', 'intention to switch' and 'consumers' post-purchase attitude towards the service firm'. Model-testing demonstrated that both direct and indirect paths significantly predicted behavioural intentions and post-purchase attitudes towards service firm. However, the indirect path mediated through consumer satisfaction explained higher total percentage of variance in behavioural intentions and post-purchase attitude towards service firm.

The present study provides additional knowledge to the research of 'consumer satisfaction' despite various research limitations mentioned previously. This research has supplied variables that are important in determining 'consumer satisfaction' in restaurants which could be examined in future research. These include 'perceived value-for-money', 'desires-congruence', 'service quality (staff behaviour)' and 'ideal self-congruence'. In addition, the consequences of 'consumer satisfaction' were revealed in this study. They are 'intention to return', 'intention to recommend', 'intention to switch' and 'post-purchase attitude towards the service firm'. This study also confirmed the link between 'consumer satisfaction' and its antecedents and consequences. It is anticipated that the findings of this doctoral research may close the gap in the literature and provide knowledge concerning 'consumer satisfaction' and suggest areas of future research.