Customers' Satisfaction Towards Online Digital Menu Experience and Intention to Revisit Family-Style Restaurants Post COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract. In the year 2020, to attract more customers during the pandemic, many traditional restaurant operators began to offer innovative experiences by adopting digital technology. To meet health and safety standards, contact-less touch points were applied to customers both on and off-premises to minimize or eliminate the number of high-touch moments in the customers' journey. Most pre-COVID-19 studies focused on the customers' technology readiness in menu ordering. Hence, this study will examine customers' satisfaction with the online digital menu experience and intention to revisit Family Style Restaurants post COVID-19 pandemic. A quantitative research method will be adopted to test the mediation effect of customers' satisfaction between their digital menu experience and intention to revisit. This conceptual paper is hoped to assist restaurant owners, especially Family Style Restaurant's operator in offering the best digital technology experience to their growing customers to get repeat orders.

Keywords: Customers' satisfaction, Digital online menu, Revisit intention, Family style restaurant, Post COVID-19

1 Introduction

Previously due to COVID-19 pandemic, the world is experiencing complex challenges affecting everything and everyone, from proletariat to professional, emotionally, and financially. This ongoing global disease was a deadly, highly-infectious disease that is caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) [1]. On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) proclaimed COVID-19 a Public Health Emergency of International

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Concern, and on March 11, 2020, it was declared a pandemic [2]. To prevent the worsening of the situation, countries worldwide announced a movement control order (MCO) or lockdown. During weeks without a specific date, the world was encouraged to enter an unprecedented quarantine in which all previously known services had to stop for an indefinite period or re-invent themselves [3].

Most retail stores and services had to close in countries with total lockdowns. Muller, a hospitality and restaurant management professor at Boston University's School of Hospitality Administration, argues that the tourism industry has particularly affected due to this unexpected crisis. As a result, the pandemic has been most affected by the restaurant business sector [4]. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented many challenges to the restaurant sector. The fast spread of COVID-19 has likely altered customers' primary concerns regarding health protection when visiting a food or beverage outlet. Most restaurants were forced to either close or operate under strict restrictions that only permitted takeaway and delivery services. Besides that, customers prefer to avoid crowded areas and are more health and safety conscious due to the pandemic.

The industry is struggling to survive during global pandemic with increasing competition and consumers demanding more off-premises services. Unfortunately, neither appears to be sufficient to secure survival for most restaurants, many of which barely survive and may never reopen [3][5]. These scenarios unequivocally initiated possible opportunities for innovation growth, such as using information and communication technology (ICT) in many services [4]. Restaurant business is one of crucial areas in the hospitality industry. With the growth of the telecommunications sector, improvements in computer capabilities, and the creation of software to assist service delivery, technology has increasingly played a role in corporate operations to support delivery of services [6]. Along with the harmful effects of the recent MCO, this industry sector has also witnessed the development of digital technologies.

The application of digital technologies in these industries has had a positive impact and experience for both parties (industrial and customer). Thus, it has become a potential element in restaurant industry. Self-service technologies (SSTs) are tools that let people carry out a task or conduct a transaction without interacting with customer support representatives. It upsurges business productivity and efficiency to offer the customers access to services through innovative and convenient channels, hence better meeting the customers' demand and subsequently increase their satisfaction [4]. Thus, the motivation of this study is to examine customers' satisfaction with online digital menu experience and intention to revisit Family Style Restaurants post COVID-19 pandemic. The hypotheses postulated as below:

H1: Online digital menu experience is significantly related to customers satisfaction

H2: Online digital menu experience significantly related to customers' revisit intention

H3: Customers' satisfaction mediates the relationship between online digital menu experience and revisit intention

2. Literature Review

2.1 COVID - 19 and Digital Transformation in the Restaurant Sector

On January 25, 2020, Malaysia reported its first COVID-19-positive case, and by April 10, 2020, the COVID-19 outbreak had spread to 213 nations. This case was brought in from Wuhan, China.

[7]. Due to the situation worsening day by day, then Malaysia's Premier Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin declared the Movement Control Order (MCO). In attempt to slow the virus's rapid spread, most countries dramatically restricted social life. As a result, the restaurant business has mainly been affected and suffer during this pandemic as government decided on lockdown and social distancing worldwide. This led to a rapid shutdown of restaurants and hotels. Due to that, many traditional restaurant operators began to offer innovative experiences by adopting digital technology to attract more customers during the pandemic. Previous research has demonstrated that businesses who invested in information technology (IT) were able to increase revenue and reduce costs [6].

Initially, due the development of technology that are more advanced and sophisticated level, every businessperson must improve his or her technological knowledge. Many business people have upgraded their computerized and even online systems, with the restaurant industry being one of them. The technology used in the restaurant industry can support ordering quality during the ordering process. For example, to meet the newly-set health and safety standards, contactless touch points on and off-premises were applied to customers to minimize or eliminate the number of high-touch moments in the customers' journey. As noted by author, most restaurant customers favor new technologies and believe that the technology will significantly improve their daily activities [8]. Their discomfort with shifting from traditional order-taking was also low, indicating slightly higher confidence in using new technology. The introduction of information and communication technologies (ICT) is currently necessary for the operation in any sector. ICT is also a strategic tool for indirect restaurant establishment promotion, with customers acting as advocates for the business by sharing their positive experiences with others [3].

2.2 Electronic Based Menu (E-Menu)

The restaurant sector has been impacted by technological advancement, in which the expansion of the telecommunications industry, improvements in computer capabilities, and the development of software to facilitate service delivery, technology has increasingly played a vital role in business operations [6]. The menu served as a guide in culinary establishment which briefly detailed on price, list of food and beverages offered to customer especially tourists [9]. When dining in a restaurant, the primary source of information is the menu. Thus, restaurant menus should be designed to present items in an appealing manner to the customer in order to induce sales [10]. Previously, reading the menu and identifying food to order was quite challenging for specific reasons, such as the menu card is written in the host country's language. Besides that, some customers lacked familiarity with the food ingredients and the way of ordering, which could leave them with disappointment. Furthermore, the traditional ordering sequence was quite time-consuming which customer needed to hand in their ordering to the waiter for further steps. Moreover, if any changes to the menu items are ordered, the request must be sent to person in charge in order to complete such requirement [11]. Errors in ordering processes lead to incorrect or out of sequence meal preparation or no consumable, resulting in added cost to the business. In addition, the standard restaurant order system uses a lot of labor to manage client reservations, meal orders, placing orders on tables, reminding customers to place orders, and billing. Due to the restrictions and problems, numerous restaurants have used technology to enhance the menu ordering process and the overall system for delivering services [8].

Nowadays, restaurant employees able to work smart by using digital technologies as an alternative for traditional method. Technology development offers practical tools and applications to everyday life and the restaurant business. In prior research, it is recommended that a contemporary restaurant feature digital menu boards and signage that may be utilized as interactive digital menus to advertise specials and discounts, share images and videos of the establishment, and alert customers to upcoming events [6]. The previous study also indicated the hospitality industry could benefit from the implementing an electronic interactive menu and ordering system for food and beverages [9]. Besides that, it increases the productivity and competitiveness of the sector. Furthermore, the impact of innovation in the food and beverages business is not on how the items are delivered, but how dishes are display on the menu [12]. Customers are more prepared than ever to use digital means when visiting restaurants due to the extensive use of videoconferencing, e-commerce, and other digital tools during the pandemic, and competition has increased with many novel offerings, such as remote ordering or personalization to improve customer experience [13]. Furthermore, restaurants with distinct characteristics are more likely to attract customers, especially when accompanied by delectable food and beverage menus.

Many studies on the E-menu application programmed in online restaurants and other related research have already been carried out by a number of writers including Tompoh et al. [14], Widarda and Hakim [15], Martono [16], Hendri [17] and Chavan et al. [18].

Digital multi-touch menu cards in restaurant are replacing traditional service, and currently, people are very familiar with touchscreen interfaces and more significant advancements in the field of technology. The ideal strategy for addressing difficulties with human error and service failures shown by the conventional technique of taking and delivering the order is also considered to be tablet-based menu ordering [8]. In the hospitality industry, using an electronic interactive food and beverage menu and ordering system can boost restaurant sales [9]. Besides that, it will facilitate speed ordering, resulting in fast, accurate and exceptional service expected to satisfy the customer. Moreover, it will be much comfortable and more accessible for the customers to place orders of their wish. Furthermore, this system can alleviate a restaurant's financial burden in the long run and generate higher customer satisfaction and behavioral intention [8]. The previous author indicated, use of technology can improve menus by accelerating service times, increasing the possibility of changing menu items, and giving customers more granular information that can increase their happiness. Therefore, using technology to order food from a menu can minimize these mistakes and failures [4].

2.3 Customers' Satisfaction

Numerous academics have previously investigated customer satisfaction. For restaurants, having the capacity to delight customers is crucial. As known, customer happiness is seen as a clear indicator of a consumer's future purchasing goals [12]. Hence, customer satisfaction becomes crucial if consumers are pleased with the services provided. According to Chochiang et al. [11], high user satisfaction depends on the customer's services during the meal such as speed, friendliness, correctness and caring. The previous author stated that all the pleasant emotions people experience after a visit, such as "happiness, acceptance, relief, delight, and pleasure," are what constitutes "customer satisfaction" [19]. While, other authors in previous studies indicated that consumers evaluate what they receive with their expectations when making a purchase to determine their level of satisfaction [1]. Meanwhile, Atikahambar et al. [20] noted that satisfaction as something that is indispensable in figuring up a profitable marketing plan, whereby "it impacts the choice, the consumption of goods and services, and the decision to return."

According to Mokhtar et al. [21], satisfaction might indicate whether a customer plans to return in the future. This demonstrates the requirement for a marketing strategy that recognizes the

value of customer satisfaction. Using of an interactive electronic food and beverage menu and ordering system can improve the restaurant business in the hospitality industry [9]. In the hotel sector, investment in digital technology is fundamental and benefits the quality of services, customer satisfaction, market quotation, productivity and operational cost reduction. Furthermore, when it is successful and implemented, it will lead to greater service productivity, resulting in the personalization of services and customer satisfaction. If customers are happy with the company, then customer happiness becomes crucial for any business. This happiness raises the potential for recurrent purchases [1]. Hence, customer satisfaction is closely related to the restaurant profits. Restaurant owners or managers should be familiar with the developing cutting-edge technology and apply it to restaurant operations [10].

2.4 Revisit Intention

The customer's willingness in returning to specific location as a result of a positive experience is known as revisit intention [22]. Previous research pointed out a positive tendency for tourists to revisit the destination and recommend it to others once they are satisfied with a goal [20]. Previously, revisit intention has been debated in several kinds of researches related to food and beverage, mainly in restaurants, which indicated result for imperative restaurant revenue [20][21]. Customer satisfaction generates a probability of revisiting the presence or absence of an affirmative attitude toward the restaurant. Meanwhile, Sudaryanto et al. [1] suggested that repurchase intentions occur when consumers are satisfied with their shopping experience, whether it is with services, products, or both.

Revisit intention is to endorse "visitors being willing to revisit the similar place, for satisfactory experiences, and suggest the place to friends to develop the loyalty" [22]. Sudaryanto et al. [1] noted that repurchase intention is the act of someone making a second buy from the same business. The primary purpose for repurchasing is past purchase experiences. Besides that, other factor that influenced repurchase intention besides e-servqual and shopping satisfaction in online and offline store is experience. Consumers tend to repurchase product or services at the exact location and share their user experiences with others, which is called post-purchase intention [4]. According to the findings of empirical studies, when it comes to attending a restaurant, service innovation (such as implementing technology) dramatically improves customer happiness and behavioral intentions, which could, in turn, increase the restaurant's market share and improve service performance [10].

3. Methodology

This chapter is discussing on how the study will be conducted in to get input data and later to be used in data analysis. The study is based on quantitative approach. The survey questionnaires will be distributed among Family Style Restaurants' customers. Multiple regression analysis models will be used to predict the variance in the dependent variable by regressing independent variables in analyzing the data. The proposed theoretical framework will serve as the starting point for the current research. The following proposed conceptual study framework describes the scenarios on the variables of interest in this study:
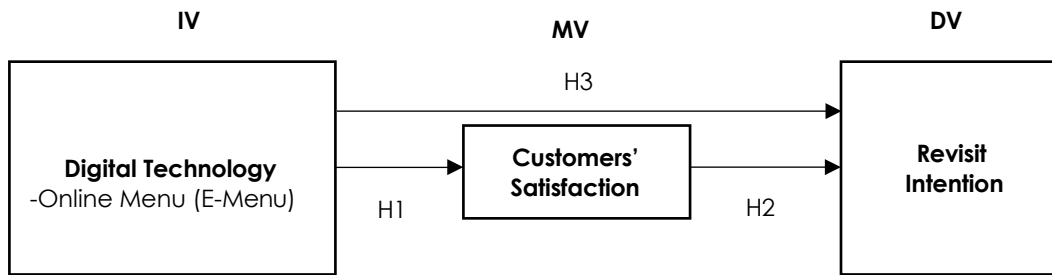
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for Digital Technology, customer's satisfaction and revisit intention

4. Contribution and Conclusion

The restaurant industry will have to reinvent itself entirely in the post-COVID-19 world, where physical distance will be the norm. As this paper is a conceptual paper, it is hoped that the result of this study later will provide crucial information for the institution and industry players to improve their knowledge and skills in adopting restaurants digital technology trends to increase customers' satisfaction and encourage revisit intention The findings of this study are thought to be significant for both academic world and practitioners. For the industry practitioners, this study can be used as guideline for restaurateurs to add differentiation and focus more on digital technology trends in restaurant industry to improve customers' satisfaction and create revisit intention. Thus, this will make a positive impact on the hospitality industry. Meanwhile, from the academic perspective, this research will be able to expand the information portfolio and expanding existing and new knowledge through the study of digital technology trends in restaurant industry, customer satisfaction and revisit intention. To conclude, implementing digital online technology in restaurant industry, such as online menu, will enhance customer experience. Placing for orders is more efficient, convenient and easy to use. In addition, it assists customers during ordering process to be quicker and more accurate by using the restaurant E-menu system. The system served as a booking medium that provides information about the available menu list. It will also lead customer's positive view towards the restaurant, increase satisfaction and create revisit intention.

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