



E-PROCEEDING HOTWEC 6.0

THE GAME ON 2022:

**THE FUTURE IS
BRIGHT**

FHPK, UMK

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THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT**

**FACUTLY OF HOSPIATLITY, TOURISM AND WELLNESS,
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA KELANTAN**

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The Impact of Memorable Gastronomy Tourism Experience (Mgte) On Behavioural Intention

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ABSTRACT

Gastronomy tourism has grown its popularity in Malaysia where tourists are drawn to the food, cultural diversity, and cuisine bazaars that are considered uniquely Malaysian. The objective of this study was to examine how such experiences influence behavioural intention and why travellers tend to recall earlier remarkable encounters to recreate the same positive sensations months and years after travelling. The present study's main contributions include the extension of the memorable tourism experience construct and the inclusion of the servicescape, novelty-seeking, experience co-creation, choice overload and experience intensification as crucial variables that influence tourists' memorable gastronomic experiences. Data were collected using a quantitative method by distributing 200 questionnaires to tourists who experience gastronomy tourism. The data collected were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The result revealed that the servicescape, novelty-seeking, experience co-creation, choice overload and experience intensification positively impact memorable gastronomy tourism experience. This paper is believed to provide great insight to the restaurant owner, policymaker, and tourism marketer in designing and promoting a memorable gastronomy experience for visitors.

Keywords: *Gastronomy, Experience Co-creation, Servicescape, Novelty seeking, Choice overload, Experience intensification & Malaysia.*

INTRODUCTION

Gastronomy tourists are people who travel, particularly to learn about different cultures via unique culinary encounters. They are of diverse ages, nationalities, and socioeconomic backgrounds (Williams, Yuan & Williams, 2018). Gastronomy tourism is becoming more popular worldwide, focusing on tasting authentic and traditional local meals. It gives local producers and service providers a means to create regional identities, raise environmental consciousness, and preserve traditional ways of life (Birch & Memery, 2020).

Gastronomy tourism has also grown in popularity in Malaysia. Tourists are drawn to Malaysian food because of its rich flavour, spiciness, and variety. Furthermore, Malaysia's cultural diversity and cuisine bazaars are viewed as distinctive to the country, making it an enticing reason to visit the country. (Saad, 2019). The amazing flavours and distinct cultural elements have made Malaysia's culinary tourist experience one-of-a-kind, attracting many people. A study conducted by Safian, Osman, Wahab, Othman, and Azhar (2021), found that first-time tourists to Malaysia find the eating experience more engaging and memorable.

Despite the uniqueness of Malaysia's gastronomy tourism experience, the online gastronomy offerings are rather limited compared to the neighbouring countries. For example, on Tripadvisor (2021), there are fewer gastronomy experiences available in Malaysia's online marketplace compared to Thailand and Indonesia, which have a more significant number of gastronomic experiences (see table 1). Such limited numbers of gastronomy experience had put Malaysia far behind its neighbouring countries.

Table1: Numbers of the gastronomy service offered in the online marketplace as of December 2021 (Source: Tripadvisor experience websites)

Online Platform Tripadvis or	Numbers of gastronomy service offer		
	Malaysia	Thailand	Indonesia
	67	164	129

Although travel-related eating experiences may trigger memories, there is little evidence that these associations are common. Authenticity and the cultural differences may influence Memorable Gastronomy Tourism Experiences (MTEs), hence the traveller's home culture may also play a role (Stone, Migacz & Sthapit, 2021). Travellers tend to recall earlier remarkable encounters to recreate the same positive sentiments months and years later. MTEs can also help attract new visitors to a place by spreading word of mouth recommendations, as many travellers would like to suggest MTEs to others (Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2013).

In Malaysia, little research has been conducted to study the influence of a memorable gastronomic tourist experience (MGTE) on behavioural intention. In comparison to other countries, Malaysian gastronomic tourism is considered as immature. Many food enterprises are still working to increase consumer acceptance of gastronomic tourism. As a result, the Malaysian MGTE research should be carried out to encourage more individuals to be concerned about this market. This study is designed to investigate the possible outcome variables, such as servicescape, novelty seeking, experience co-creation, experience intensification, and choice overload on memories of gastronomy tourism experiences in enhancing tourist behavioural intention.

There are five objectives of this research:

1. To examine the relationship between novelty seeking and gastronomic behavioural intention.
2. To examine the relationship between experience co-creation and gastronomic behavioural intention.
3. To examine the relationship between servicescape and gastronomic behavioural intention.
4. To examine the relationship between experience intensification and gastronomic behavioural intention.
5. To examine the relationship between choice overload and gastronomic behavioural intention.

Significance of the Study

Future researchers may extend the body of literature in gastronomy tourism research. The findings can assist practitioners in the contemporary event industry in gaining insight on how to improve their business in today's challenging, and competitive market.

Practical perspective

This study will benefit the general consumers in comprehending various issues of gastronomic tourism. Furthermore, the gastronomy organisation can use this scale as an alternative in evaluating satisfaction performance throughout the gastronomy tourism experience and helps to understand the needs and wants of the guest who dines in the restaurant. This finding will assist the gastronomy establishment in developing various activities and packages suitable for entertaining guests other than just dining at the restaurant.

Academic perspective

Provides a novel contribution by extending literature review of experience and gastronomic tourism. Additionally, this study will help guide future research improvements, especially on subjects related to gastronomic tourism. Besides that, this study will help researchers make a great conclusion from the results of theories, hypotheses and research enquiries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Behavioural intention

According to Leong, Ab Karim, Awang, and Abu Bakar (2017), the basic assumption of the behavioural intention notion is that evaluative reactions to a subject, such as a product, service, or environment, and their contribution to the construction of a good or poor feeling. The notion has been widely employed in the tourism sector to measure visitor behaviour after exposure to tourism products or services in a location. Tourists interested in visiting a specific location or participating in a tourism-related activity are more likely to be loyal.

Gastronomic tourism experience

Gastronomy tourism is one of today's most prominent speciality tourist segments (Saadiah and Isa, 2002). According to scholars in gastronomy tourism, the appeal of gastronomic tourism is sometimes referred to as soft power tactics. Gastronomy significantly impacts the overall trip experience (Correia, Moital Da Costa & Peres, 2008; Okumus & McKercher, 2007). According to Telfer and Wall (2000), travellers spend one-third of their travel budget on food, demonstrating the importance of food consumption in tourism. For both recreational and economic reasons, the tourism industry heavily relies on local cuisine. Visitors' contentment is influenced by gastronomic experiences (Fox, 2007), meaning that the experience that attracts tourists impacts their satisfaction levels.

Novelty seeking

The concept of novelty-seeking behaviour is broad, covering feelings of excitement, accomplishment, awe, and avoidance of boredom. The desire for novelty is generally regarded as an inherent characteristic of travellers (Lee & Crompton, 1992). Tourists' gastronomic tastes are influenced by the novelty seeker's desire to try new dishes (Mak, Lumbers, Eves, & Chang, 2012). This research focuses on the delicate, contradictory, and private aspects of traveller eating experiences. As a result of this exclusive concentration on particular tourist activity, any association between food intake and general travel motivation, particularly novelty seeking, has been lost. Travellers' choices of tourist activities and attitudes toward them are influenced by their desire for novelty (Fields, 2002; Weaver et al., 2009). According to several studies, the knowledge link between novelty seeking and behavioural intention has a declining effect on tourist revisit intention (Assaker, 2011). For example, Assaker (2011) discovered that travellers with a high level of novelty seeking usually did not revisit the places they have visited. Jang and Feng (2007) contend that tourists seek novelty for short-term or long-term revisit intents.

Experience co-creation

According to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004), co-creation is an opportunity for businesses and consumers to collaborate in such a way that both parties benefit from the activity, are free to participate in it, and acknowledge their own and each other's roles as contributors to customer behaviours. Eschevins, Giboreau, Julien, and Dacremont (2019) explained that the gastronomy of existence occurs when visitors seek out food and beverage complements as well as dining excursions that promote gastronomy education. A previous study discovered a link between co-creation and memorable holiday moments (Mathis et al., 2016; Sthapit et al., 2018). Sthapit et al. (2019) found a significant positive relationship between experience co-creation and behavioural intention. Racho, Breda, Fernandes, and Joukes (2021) found that tourists actively participate in food and wine tourism.

Servicescape

The term "servicescape," sometimes known as "atmospherics," refers to a variety of physical or built environment elements that influence consumer and employee behaviour in service organisations. The servicescape (e.g., music, odour, colour, equipment, and architecture) assists guests in differentiating and categorising service organisations based on their expected quality. According to some studies, there are known links between servicescape and gastronomic behavioural intention since both substantive and communicative servicescape have a favourable impact on intention. Nguyen & Nguyen, 2021, observed that servicescape, or a restaurant's appearance, had a moderating influence and impacts on tourists' behavioural intention.

Experience intensification

On-the-spot purchase behaviour is the term for experience intensification. Tourists' memorable gastronomic experiences are influenced by the intensity of their experiences. The enjoyment of a journey has an impact on other elements of one's life, which has an impact on one's overall happiness. Furthermore, life satisfaction refers to happiness in all areas of one's life, including health, safety, and travel (Sthapit et al., 2019). Several researchers have found that knowledge has an impact on experience intensification and behavioural intention (Coudounaris & Sthapit, 2017). Experience intensification was identified by Sthapit et al. (2019) as a critical factor impacting travellers' memorable gastronomic experiences. Anton, Camarero, and Laguna-Garcia (2018) revealed that experience intensification had a moderating effect on culinary tourists behavioural intentions.

Choice overload

The intricacy of a decision problem confronting an individual surpasses the cognitive resources available to them, resulting in choice overload, also known as over choice. In tourism, "choice overload" refers to the causal relationship between the number of options and choice-related experiences. Recent research has found that having excessive options can be hazardous. Diehl and Poynor (2010) reintroduced choice overload by Iyengar and Lepper (2000), which demonstrated that having more options has detrimental consequences. Choice overload is defined as a relationship between the number of available options and choice-related emotions such as discontent (Scheibehenne et al., 2010). The occurrence of option overload influences throughout tourist decision-making processes and is the subject of controversy in this area (Nguyen & Yuksel, 2017). Therefore, choice overload affect behavioural intention (Sthapit et al., 2019).

Research Hypothesis

In this study, there were five hypotheses were determined. The independent variables were novelty seeking, experience co-creation, servicescape, experience intensification, and choice overload. Dependent variable in this study was behavioural intention on gastronomic tourism. Based on the variables stated above, the hypotheses for this study were:

H1: There is a significant relationship between novelty seeking and gastronomic behavioural intention.

H2: There is a significant relationship between experience co-creation and gastronomic behavioural intention.

H3: There is a significant relationship between servicescape and gastronomic behavioural intention.

H4: There is a significant relationship between experience intensification and gastronomic behavioural intention.

H5: There is a significant relationship between choice overload and gastronomic behavioural intention.

Research Framework

A study framework was developed to investigate the relationship between gastronomic behavioural intention and the relationship of memorable gastronomic tourism experiences.

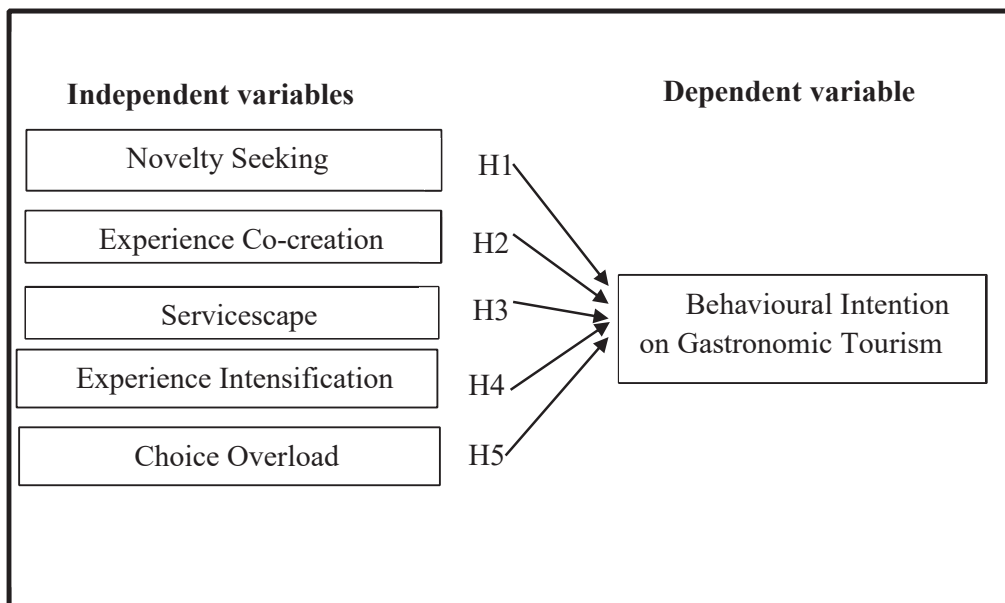


Figure 2.1: Proposed Conceptual Framework adopted from Sthapit et al. (2019)

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Research design can be defined as a method used by a researcher to conduct a scientific study systematically. A suitable conclusion is reached by the total synchronisation of recognised components and data (Hyun, 2018). Research design can be divided into two, which are quantitative and qualitative research design. For the current study, the researchers employed quantitative research to carry out the research.

Data Collection

This research was conducted based on primary data. The process of obtaining data through surveys, interviews, or experiments is known as primary information gathering. An online questionnaire has been used in this study, which was constructed using Google forms. It was used because of the current situation of COVID-19 pandemic, and it is the best option that researchers can do because they cannot meet face-to-face. The sample size for this study was 250 respondents.

Two hundred fifty respondents mentioned above are those tourists who have participated and visited the place of gastronomy tourism. They were selected for this study because they were suitable to be the respondents, and they also have the experience of visiting such gastronomic places. Furthermore, the respondents for this study were discovered on social media platforms such as Instagram by searching for hashtags used by users. The respondents were reached personally via social media and asked whether they wanted to participate in this study by answering the questionnaire.

Sampling

Non-probability sampling was used in selecting participants in this research. Convenience sampling, quota sampling, judgement (or purposive) sampling, and snowball sampling are just a few of the non-probability sampling approaches. Purposive sampling was used in this study.

Purposive sampling is the deliberate selection of a participant based on the subject's qualities, which is appropriate for this study. Non-random technique does not need any underlying concepts or a set number of participants. In essence, the researchers determine what data was required and then search for people who can and will provide it based on their knowledge or experience. Finding and choosing persons and groups that are knowledgeable and experienced about a topic of interest is part of this process (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016).

Data Analysis

The researchers used the statistical application Statistical Programmers for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.2 to analyse the primary data. SPSS is a program-based data analysis and processing window that enables the creation of tables and pie charts. Computers assisted researchers by reducing the work necessary to gather data and facilitating quantitative analysis. The researchers presented the quantitative data using descriptive statistics, reliability statistics, Pearson's correlation, and regression.

FINDINGS

Descriptive Analysis

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis

Variable	Items	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Novelty Seeking	4	4.20	0.650
Experience Co-Creation	5	4.05	0.734
Servicescape	4	4.17	0.737
Experience Intensification	3	4.11	0.773
Choice Overload	2	3.97	0.789
Behaviour Intention	5	4.11	0.405

The descriptive analysis of independent variables shows a moderate mean score (M=3.9430, SD=0.46479). Altogether the dimension variables also scored a moderate mean score where novelty seeking (M=4.0213, SD=0.41771), experience co-creation (M=3.9430, SD=0.46479), servicescape (M=4.2200, SD=0.51884), experience intensification (M=4.1783, SD=0.57384). The choice overload variable scored (M=3.9900, SD=0.86313). The dependent variable is behaviour intention (M=4.11, SD=0.405).

Reliability test

Table 3: Result of Reliability Analysis

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Novelty Seeking	4	0.241
Experience Co-Creation	5	0.563
Servicescape	4	0.611
Experience Intensification	3	0.568

Choice Overload	2	0.191
Behavior Intention	5	0.420

This analysis used the reliability analysis to determine Cronbach's Alpha values for all variables. The values are as follows: novelty seeking (0.241), experience co-creation (0.563), servicescape (0.611), experience intensification (0.568), choice overload (0.191) and behaviour intention (0.420). All the reliability was above the 0.9 average, usually considered excellent (Matkar, 2012).

Demographic Profile

The online platform assigned a total of 200 sets of questionnaires. Table 1 shows the summarised demographic results of the respondent's profile. The majority of respondents are female, with 55 per cent (n=110) as opposed to 45 per cent (n=90). This indicated that the survey collected a range of male and female responses, which would demonstrate how many people of both genders participate in gastronomic tourism.

As shown by Table 4, the respondents of this survey are primarily between the ages of 23 and 30, with a total of 123 respondents (61.5%). The 19-22 years old with 46 responses (23.0%), age between below and above 30 years old with 25 respondents (12.5%), and age 18 years old and below with six respondents (3.0%). The result indicated that the survey was able to know the age range that respondents most experience gastronomy because most of them are students and employed.

Respondent profile	Classification	Frequency N=200	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	90	45%
	Female	110	55%
Age	18 Years Old and Below	6	3%
	19-22 Years Old	46	23%
	23-30 Years Old	123	61.5%
	Above 30 Years Old	25	12.5%
Race	Malay	165	82.5%
	Chinese	18	9%
	Indian	13	6.5%
	Indonesia	2	1%
	Bumiputera Sabah	1	0.5%
	Melanau	1	0.5%
Marital Status	Single	155	77.5%
	Married	45	22.5%
Education	Primary	1	0.5%
	Secondary	15	7.5%
	Diploma	53	26.5%

	Bachelor of Degree	111	55.5%
	Master degree	20	10%
	PhD	0	0%
Occupation	Student	107	53.5%
	Employed	60	30%
	Employed part time	10	5%
	Self-Employed	19	9.5%
	Unemployed	3	1.5%
	Retired	1	0.5%
Income (RM)	Below RM2000	178	50.4%
	RM2001-RM3000	69	19.5%
	RM3001-RM4000	64	18.1%
	Above RM4000	19	5.4%
States	Kelantan	33	16.5
	Negeri Sembilan	13	6.5
	Kedah	11	5.5
	Johor	17	8.5
	Pahang	14	7
	Pulau Pinang	12	6
	Perlis	9	4.5
	Selangor	30	15
	Melaka	14	7
	Terengganu	8	4
	Perak	12	6
	Wilayah Persekutuan	16	8
	Sarawak	4	2
Sabah	7	3.5	

Table 4: Respondent Demographic Profile

With 165 responses, the data shows that Malays form the majority of those who participated in the questionnaire (82.5%). With 18 respondents (9.0%), Chinese are second, followed by Indians with 13 respondents (6.5%), Indonesians with two respondents (1.0%), and Bumiputera Sabah and Melanau with only one responder each (0.5%). The finding indicated that the survey was able to receive data on races. Most of the respondent who experience gastronomy are Malays because Malay is the majority race in Malaysia, and most of them are Kelantanese.

According to the result, majority of the respondents are single, with 77.5% (n=155) as opposed to 22.5% (n=45). The survey was able to collect information on how many people of both marital statuses participate in gastronomic tourism. For education level, the majority of respondents had a Bachelor's Degree, with 111 respondents (55.5%). Following that, 53 of the respondents (26.5%) have a diploma, 20 of the respondents (10.0%) have a Master's Degree, 15 of the respondents (7.5%) are secondary students, one of the respondents (1.0%) is a primary school student.

The average monthly income is shown in Table 4. The highest income of respondents is below RM2000, with 133 respondents (66.5 per cent), followed by income RM2001-RM3000 with 43 respondents (21.5 per cent), RM3001-RM4000 with 22 respondents (11.0 per cent), and income exceeding RM4000 with two respondents (6.3 per cent).

The majority of respondents (33%) live in the state of Kelantan (16.5 per cent). Following that, 30 of the respondents (15.0 per cent) live in Selangor, 17 from Johor (8.5 per cent), and 16 from (8.0 per cent) Wilayah Persekutuan. In both Pahang and Melaka have 14 respondents, with a response rate of 7.0 per cent. The rest of the respondents are from Negeri Sembilan (6.5 per

cent, n=13), 12 respondents from both Pulau Pinang and Perak with 6.0 per cent, Kedah (5.5 per cent, n=11), Perlis (4.5 per cent, n=9), Terengganu (4.0 per cent, n=8), Sabah (3.5 per cent, n=7), and the lowest, which four responses were collected from Sarawak region respondents (2.0 per cent).

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Five (5) hypotheses were presented in this section. The first hypothesis determines the positive relationship between novelty seeking and behavioural intention. The second hypothesis determines the positive relationship between experience co-creation and behavioural intention. The third hypothesis determines the positive relationship between servicescape and behavioural intention. The fourth hypothesis determines the positive relationship between experience intensification and behavioural intention. Finally, the fifth hypothesis determines the positive relationship between choice overload and behavioural intention.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Analysis

Hypothesis	Result	Findings of Data Analysis
H1: There is a positive relationship between novelty seeking and behavioural intention.	r = 0. 288, p = 0.001 Weak	H1: Accepted
H2: There is a positive relationship between experience co-creation and behavioural intention.	r = 0. 498, p = 0.001 Moderate	H2: Accepted
H3: There is a positive relationship between servicescape and behavioural intention.	r = 0. 451, p = 0.001 Moderate	H3: Accepted
H4: There is a positive relationship between experience intensification and behavioural intention.	r = 0. 269, p = 0.001 Weak	H4: Accepted
H5: There is a positive relationship between choice overload and behavioural intention.	r = 0. 406, p = 0.001 Moderate	H5: Accepted

The above table serves to summarise the findings of this study. The hypothesis that has been tested for this study will be further elaborated as follow:

Hypothesis one (H1) proposed that novelty seeking correlates positively with behavioural intention. The finding reported in this study revealed that the novelty seeking recorded value of Pearson Correlation, which is $r = 0.288$, $p = 0.001$. Thus, the result accepts hypothesis 1 (H1), whereby novelty seeking is positively significant with behavioural intention.

Hypothesis two (H2) proposed that experience co-creation positively correlates with behavioural intention. The finding reported in this study revealed that the experience co-creation recorded value of Pearson Correlation, which is $r = 0.498$, $p = 0.001$. Thus, the result accepts hypothesis 2 (H2), whereby experience co-creation is positively significant with behavioural intention.

Hypothesis three (H3) proposed that servicescape positively correlates with behavioural intention. The finding reported in this study revealed that the servicescape recorded value of

Pearson Correlation, which is $r = 0.451$, $p = 0.001$. Thus, the result accepts hypothesis 3 (H3), whereby servicescape is positively significant with behavioural intention.

Hypothesis four (H4) proposed that experience intensification positively correlates with behavioural intention. The finding reported in this study revealed that the experience intensification recorded value of Pearson Correlation, which is $r = 0.269$, $p = 0.001$. Thus, the result accepts hypothesis 4 (H4), whereby experience intensification is positively significant with behavioural intention.

Hypothesis five (H5) proposed that choice overload positively correlates with behavioural intention. The finding reported in this study revealed that the choice overload recorded value of Pearson Correlation, which is $r = 0.406$, $p = 0.001$. Thus, the result accepts hypothesis 5 (H5), whereby choice overload is positively significant with behavioural intention.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The preceding chapter has determined certain empirical characteristics that influence gastronomic behavioural intention. In order to acquire a higher number of respondents, researchers can expand the study region from one country to another (for example, Thailand, which has a lot of culinary tourism) to increase the number of participants and could improve the results. Comparing demographics of regions studied overseas might also increase the number of questions in each segment.

Furthermore, future research should incorporate additional MTE characteristics such as hedonism and culture because looking at other variables will provide a greater insight into the study area. By understanding and grasping the concept of MGTE would make it easier for tourism practitioners to design and develop the various sorts of MGTE that may be provided to guests. Additional studies can also help to accelerate the process of improving Malaysia's tourism sector.

Lastly, more methodological work is needed for researchers' reference. Future researchers are recommended to use qualitative methodologies because it is feasible to document the experiences and opinions of tourists who have had mixed or negative experiences. They are willing to contribute their time to this type of research. Returning to research events will be beneficial if the researcher establishes a strategy and conducts a thorough cost-benefit analysis. Although methodologically challenging, conducting long-term research to investigate the factors of visitor gastronomic experience and intent to return to gastronomy tourism events could be beneficial.

CONCLUSION

Gastronomy tourism has increased in popularity in Malaysia, with tourists drawn to Malaysian food, the country's cultural richness, and cuisine bazaars that are considered particularly Malaysian. The aim of this study was to investigate how such experiences influence behavioural intention and why travellers have a tendency to recall past spectacular encounters in an attempt to reproduce the same happy sensations months and years later after travelling. The current study's main contributions include the extension of the memorable tourism experience construct and the inclusion of the servicescape, novelty-seeking, experience co-creation, choice overload, and experience intensification as critical variables influencing tourists' memorable gastronomic experiences. Data were gathered through quantitative study by delivering 250 questionnaires to gastronomic visitors. The data collected were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The findings demonstrated that servicescape, novelty-seeking, experience co-creation, option overload, and experience intensification all had a beneficial impact on memorable gastronomic tourism experiences. This study is expected to provide valuable insight to restaurant owners, policymakers, and tourist marketers in planning and promoting a memorable gastronomic experience for visitors.

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