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Staging Memorable Dining Experience in Food Tourism: A Narrative Literature Review of Ethnic Restaurants

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Abstract
Despite extensive research on staging the dining experience in a restaurant, the customer experience in patronizing ethnic restaurants remains under-investigated. It is important to note that ethnic restaurants are popular among tourists and play a significant role in meeting the demands of the food tourism industry. However, there has been insufficient relevant research to understand the potential of ethnic restaurants as a marketing tool in the tourism industry. Thus, this paper seeks to address this gap by exploring the strategies used by ethnic restaurants to stage memorable dining experiences. A narrative review approach was applied to 60 articles obtained from scholarly search engines to provide a comprehensive view of the strategies implemented by ethnic restaurants. The strategies were classified into six categories; (1) offering an authentic quality menu; (2) strengthening cultural identity through the physical environment; (3) creating harmonious ambiance; (4) using proper and suitable lighting and colours; (5) providing quality services and improving performance; and (6) collaboration projects with the tourism stakeholders. By implementing these strategies, ethnic restaurants can be positioned as a complete package in food tourism marketing, providing both authentic food and a memorable dining experience.
Keywords: Food Tourism, Ethnic Restaurant, Memorable Dining Experience, Physical Environment, Literature Review, Cultural Identity

Introduction
Food tourism, also known as "culinary tourism" and "gastronomy tourism" (gastrotourism) has become a global niche area of interest in the tourism industry for nearly half a century (Birch & Memery, 2020; De Albuquerque Meneguel et al., 2019; Hernandez-Rojas et al., 2021). Most studies equated the terms because of the similarity in which food is the primary

motivation for tourists (Zhang et al., 2019). Each food establishment offers various interesting, mouth-watering foods ranging from street hawker stalls to upscale restaurants (Chavarria & Phakdee-Auksorn, 2017). In 2018, 82.8 percent of tourists ranked food items as their top chart for tourist expenditure upon their visits to Malaysia (Tourism Malaysia, 2019). This statistic indicates that food is vital in boosting the tourism industry. Notably, tourists look forward to enjoying authentic, unique and delicious local cuisines during their visit (Okumus & Cetin, 2018; Tresidder, 2014). Besides, consuming local food is one of the ways to learn, understand and adapt to the lifestyle of local culture (Wijaya et al., 2016). In addition, it is an opportunity to make potential tourists familiar with the local culture and identity (Atsız et al., 2022; Morales & Cordova, 2019).

Developing the brand and image of tourist attractions demands basic and current marketing and management strategies, using verified tools and referring to different philosophies (Ellis et al., 2018). Specifically, promoting and branding local cuisines via food festivals or by creating attractive food images and distinctive recipes has also become a trend today (Lai et al., 2018; Madaleno et al., 2017). For example, the Tourism Bureau of Taiwan introduced Gourmet Taiwan International Action Program as part of the country's marketing strategies to promote local food and improve the competitiveness of the f&b industry in the global market (Lan, Wu & Lee, 2012). Meanwhile, Malaysia has introduced Malaysia Kitchen, a collaboration program with celebrity chefs to introduce Malaysian cuisine globally, especially in the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia (Rockower, 2012). Besides, the Malaysian Homestay Program under the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia (MoTAC) is a favored cultural package inclusive of food search, traditional cooking classes, cultural performances as well as traditional games in accommodating the tourists (MOTAC, 2017; Ismail et al., 2016).

Although extensive research has been done pertaining to food tourism and marketing strategies (Silkes et al., 2013), most scholars discuss these topics separately without exploring the "ethnic restaurants" realm, which is currently lacking. Asian countries like Thailand, Taiwan, and South Korea have continuously supported their ethnic restaurants abroad, reflecting their recognition of the restaurants' great potential in promoting the food tourism industry. They believe that ethnic restaurants abroad can (1) instigate interest among the locals to learn more about a particular country's local culture and identity, (2) portray a positive attitude towards a destination image, and (3) motivate the patron to visit the host country (Jang, 2017). In line with that, recent research argues that the authenticity and uniqueness of ethnic restaurants should be persistently promoted as these food places also serve as "cultural ambassadors" (Jang & Eves, 2019; Wood & Munoz, 2006).

Literature Review
Food Tourism
The term "food tourism" was introduced in the eighteenth century to express the gastronomical experience of consuming food and wine during tours (Kunasegaran et al., 2019). Over the past year, studies have explored food and tourism inter-relationship and how it affects tourism demand (Hendijani & Chern, 2014; Okumus et al., 2013; McKercher et al., 2008; du Rand & Heath, 2006). According to Stone et al (2022), food tourism can be considered a subset of cultural tourism because food and drink experiences can teach tourists about different cultures in the countries. Previous scholars discovered that various types of

food tourism reflect people's interest in food as a travel motivation. They divide it into three sections which are primary, secondary, and subsidiary to other interests (Hall & Sharples, 2003).

The first primary section consists of high interest from the people where most of their activities are food related because they want to have a savoury experience of the country by visiting a variety of restaurants, stalls, and markets in order to satisfy their needs. This activity is called gourmet tourism, cuisine tourism, and gastronomic tourism. The second is culinary tourism, where travellers visit a local food provider or festival as part of extended travel activities. The last section reflects the travellers who have a low interest in food but enjoyed the cuisine because it is different and unique. This falls under rural/urban tourism attributes (Tsai & Wang, 2017).

Ethnic Restaurant
Nowadays, ethnic foods are gaining popularity, and people can easily purchase them from supermarkets (Ting et al., 2019). Consequently, customers no longer perceive ethnic foods as authentic because they have become familiar with and accustomed to the taste. In this sense, the ethnic restaurant can defy the odds to counter this situation, as it is not only providing authentic foods but also emphasizes the unique experience through the dining environment. An ethnic restaurant can be classified as a "themed restaurant", which differs from regular restaurants (Jang et al., 2012). It portrays a unique concept and theme through the food, ambiance, physical environment, and services (Ishak et al., 2018).

Ethnic restaurants usually represent minorities of different ethnicities in some countries. This type of restaurant complements the food tourism industry as they are the intermediaries which connect people with authentic and traditional food. For example, the Thai government introduced the Global Kitchen Project to boost the country's tourism industry (Horng & Tsai, 2010) by building a database of Thai restaurants worldwide to encourage more people to consume Thai dishes. The government believes people who enjoy eating Thai food will eventually travel to Thailand. On top of that, the Thai government also introduced Thai Select, a certification program implemented in 2006. The certification program aims to elevate ethnic restaurants abroad by portraying the country's originality through interior design, ambiance, and menus (Berno et al., 2019). In this way, they prepare and subconsciously make consumers aware of and familiar with Thai and its features.

This program has successfully promoted Tom Yum and Pad Thai as among the most globally recognized dishes in the world. Furthermore, in a 2017 survey of 35,000 global travellers' favorite international foods, Thai cuisine ranked in the top 10 out of 50 international cuisines (Cheung, 2017). Marukatat (2018) mentioned that all these government-enforced strategies have made Thailand an exclusive tourism destination, ranking 10th in the world.

Memorable Dining Experience in Restaurants
According to Pine and Gilmore (1998), a memorable experience takes place when the staged services amaze and look appealing to the customers. In relation to the restaurant industry, a "memorable dining experience" (MDE) is a special type of customer experience where it specifically focuses on memorable elements that occur or exist within restaurant settings and are positively remembered and retrieved retrospectively (Cao, Li, DiPietro, & So, 2018). When

customers have that MDE with the restaurants, it gives them satisfaction leading to positive behavioural intentions.

Numerous studies in previous works are also claiming the same, whereby, with MDE, the restaurant will have return intentions, loyalty, and purchase intentions from the customers. Customers will also recommend the place to others by sharing positive feedback prior to their most recent visit through the word of mouth (WOM) or using social media platforms; which is electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) (Tsaur & Lo, 2020; Shahzadi et al., 2018; Jin et al., 2015; Chen et al., 2015; Durna et al., 2015; Bujisic et al., 2014; Ryu et al., 2012; Ha & Jang, 2012; Lin & Mattila, 2010; Namkung & Jang, 2008).

A study by Meng and Choi (2018) later stated that the dining experience is valued and stimulated by the authenticity presented in ethnic restaurants. This finding is similar to what had been found previously, where Chang (2016) addressed that authenticity is crucial in establishing positive emotions in customers. Authenticity will complement the ambiance, environment, and products staged in the themed restaurant. It will also fulfill customers' needs, wants, and pleasures, searching and craving for a unique type of themed restaurant (Guedes et al., 2020). Similarly, previous research explains that in order to have the MDE, all of the elements in the restaurant's settings must complement each other to positively impact the customers (Seyitoğlu & Ivanov, 2020). The associated elements are service staff, locations, ambiance, physical environment, food, menu, and layout (Harrington et al., 2012; Heung & Gu, 2012; Ryu & Jang, 2008; Andersson & Mossberg, 2004).

The Role of Ethnic Restaurants in the Food Tourism Industry
Latiff et al (2019) posited that food authenticity is the catalyst for customers or tourists to come and visit certain places of interest. It was further discovered that delicious and authentic cuisines introduced abroad are powerful in attracting more tourists, particularly foodies (a person who is very, very, very interested in food). Foodies are the ones talking about food at any gathering—salivating over restaurants, recipes, and radicchio. They do not think they are being trivial—"Foodies consider food to be an art, on a level with painting or drama" (Barr & Levy, 1984, p. 6), and they visit host countries simply to enjoy an amazing gastronomic experience. On a similar note, the quality of local delicacies and cultural uniqueness are also two key points for tourists to gain satisfaction from their visit (Hendijani, 2016; Kim et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2020). Hence, ethnic restaurants which offer original, authentic, and delicious cuisine with a pop of beautiful interior décor to reflect the local culture can improve the number of tourist visits in the future.

In addition, Zain et al (2018) postulated that local food consumption significantly influences customers' perceptions of the destination image in the country. It can also trigger the destination choice made by the tourists (Lai et al., 2018). This finding is supported by previous pieces of evidence, which conclude that novelty and knowledge-seeking are important push and pull factors that motivate tourists to visit the place (Yousefi & Marzuki, 2012). Thus, an ethnic restaurant is an ideal place to offer food authenticity and a unique atmosphere to the customers, portraying the country's positive destination image.

Based on research conducted by Jang and Eves (2019), they found that the primary motive for Asian and British customers to visit Korean ethnic restaurants is to learn about and

experience other cultures. This type of restaurant offering is not only limited to the original taste of the cuisine but also the decoration, architectural building, ambiance, dining etiquette, and staff uniforms, which are staged to enrich the theming itself. The researchers also indicated that visiting an ethnic restaurant will boost British tourists' travel motivation as the customers thirst to experience the exotic taste and unique experiences. Furthermore, ethnic restaurants provide an opportunity to lure people to visit the place one day (Chen et al., 2020).

Methodology

The goal of this study is to summarise the main findings from primary research and contribute to a better knowledge of the strategies discussed. Hence, a narrative literature review technique was adopted because of this interpretive goal and the expanse of the literature. A narrative review aimed at finding and summarising past research, eliminating duplications, and discovering new research subjects that have not yet been addressed (Ferrari, 2015; Derish & Annesley, 2011; Grant & Booth, 2009; Cronin et al., 2008). There are three stages involved in retrieving the relevant articles for this paper. The search begins with discovering the keywords and terms (Green, Johnson & Adams, 2001). For this study, the authors selected a few keywords and strings related to the subject of the study, as stated in Table 1. All the keywords were used in different search engines, including Scopus, Google Scholar, Science Direct, Emerald Publishing, Wiley and Taylor & Francis. The databases were searched without narrowing down on specific years to ensure the results are not limited to any period of time (however, the usable articles were narrowed down to those published between 2001 to 2021). This stage resulted in retrieving 752 articles (Table 1).

Table 1
Result from the First Stage

Databases	Search Strings	Total Results
Google Scholar	"food tourism" "gastro*" "ethnic restaurant" "cultural"	33
	"food tourism" "gastro*" "traditional restaurant" "cultural"	28
Scopus	(TITLE-ABS-KEY (food AND tourism) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (gastronomy) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (restaurant) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (cultural AND dining) AND NOT (ethnic) AND NOT (traditional))	11
ScienceDirect	food tourism; ethnic restaurant; cultural dining; gastronomy; gastronomic; traditional restaurant	110
Emerald Insight	food tourism AND (gastro*) AND NOT (ethnic restaurant) AND (cultural dining) AND NOT (traditional restaurant)	119
Wiley Online Library	"food+tourism" anywhere and "ethnic+restaurant" anywhere and "cultural+dining" anywhere and "gastronomy" anywhere and "traditional+restaurant" anywhere	155
Taylor Francis Online	[All: food tourism] AND [All: or gastronomy] AND [All: or ethnic restaurant] AND [All: and cultural dining] AND [All: or traditional restaurant]	296
TOTAL		**752**

In the second stage, using the same methodology as Thorpe et al (2005), all of the citations were downloaded into the bibliographic software Mendeley, where the titles were analysed against the pre-defined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Although there are drawbacks to evaluating merely the research titles, some authors have found this method to be effective when dealing with large numbers of citations (Pittaway et al., 2004; Thorpe et al., 2005). If the research title is too vague, the citation abstract was reviewed to understand the relevancy of the study. During this screening process, the citations were examined to classify and identify duplicate citations, book reviews and anonymous authors. These efforts resulted in the identification of 202 citations. The final stage of the screening process is where the authors carefully read the abstracts of 202 articles to understand their fit and connection to the purpose of this paper. To maximize the quality of this review, the authors created a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria as depicted in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2
Inclusion Criteria

Criteria	Reasons for Inclusion
All Countries	To ensure this study is not limited to a certain region or country
All Years	To guarantee the relevancy of this study is not limited to certain years
Restaurant Management Strategies	To identify the strategies for the restaurant to provide a memorable dining experience to the customers
Customers' Preferences	To explore the factors that influence customers to dine in ethnic restaurants and taste the local food
Food/Gastronomy Tourism	To identify the factors that contribute to this particular industry

Table 3
Exclusion Criteria

Criteria	Reasons for Exclusion
Languages	Only English is being accepted to be reviewed, as English is a global language used in academic articles
Culture	The articles discussed other contexts of culture, such as the work culture, races, and environment and not focusing issues on how culture is involved in the dining environment
Tourism	Eliminating articles examining other than food tourism issues such as spa tourism, dark tourism, and health tourism

A total of 60 articles were identified at this stage, which were deemed relevant for this literature review. The full texts of the studies were then thoroughly examined to extract the strategies implemented by the ethnic restaurants to provide a memorable dining experience to the customers. To extract the details of the strategies highlighted in the articles, NVIVO software was used to conduct the content analysis for this paper. According to Patton (2002), the phrase "content analysis" comprises a range of ways of understanding qualitative data in order to identify its basic consistencies, meanings, and trends.

The 60 articles were then read thoroughly and repeatedly to help identify possible patterns and trigger ideas. Using NVIVO, the researchers highlighted the strategies mentioned in the articles as the study codes. In this coding process, a word can be derived into two codes, as it may explain two different strategies for the restaurant. As a result, the analysis revealed six strategies namely: (1) offering an authentic quality menu; (2) strengthening cultural identity through the physical environment; (3) creating a harmonious ambiance; (4) using proper and suitable lighting and colours; (5) providing quality services and improving performance; and (6) collaboration projects with the tourism stakeholders. The total of the articles for each strategy is mentioned in the discussion.

Findings

The analysis from the review discovered that six main strategies had been applied by ethnic restaurants in staging memorable dining experiences at their places. Table 4 presents the list included in this study.

Table 4
Summarisation of Articles

Author(s) & Years	Countries/ Location	Types of restaurant/ Types of food	Food Authenticity	Physical Environment	Ambiance	Lighting & Colours	Service Staff	Collaboration Third Party
1. Berno et al (2019)	Thailand	Thai food	√	√	√			
2. Birch & Memery (2020)	Australia	South East Queensland's local food	√					
3. Chhabra et al (2013)	United States	Indian restaurant	√	√	√			
4. Chavarria & Phakdee-auksorn (2017)	Phuket, Thailand	Thai street food	√					
5. Chen et al (2020)	Yangzhou, China	Chinese restaurant	√					
6. DiPietro & Levitt (2017)	South-eastern United States	Regional American-style restaurant		√				
7. Guedes et al (2020).	-	-	√					
8. Ha (2019)	United States	Korean restaurant	√		√		√	
9. Hernandez-Rojas et al (2021)	Cordoba, Spain	Restaurants that serve local food	√					
10. Hernández-Rojas & Huete-Alcocer (2021).	Cordoba, Spain	Traditional restaurants	√	√			√	
11. Hsu & Scott (2020)	Macau	-	√					

12. Hussain et al (2018)	China	Chinese restaurants	√	√	√		√	
13. Isfiaty & Darmayanti (2015)	Bandung, Indonesia	Warung Lela (Indonesian restaurant)		√				
14. Ishak et al (2018)	Malaysia	Themed restaurant		√	√	√		
145. Ishak et al (2020)	Malaysia	Themed restaurant		√	√	√	√	
16. Jang et al (2012)	United States	Korean restaurant	√	√	√		√	
17. Jang & Eves (2019)	United States	Ethnic (Asian) restaurant	√	√				
18. Jang et al (2011)	United States	Chinese restaurant	√	√	√			
19. Jeaheng & Han (2020)	Thailand	Thai street food	√		√		√	
20. Kala (2020)	Uttarakhand, India	Restaurant		√	√			
21. Khalifa (2015)	Cairo, Egypt	Ethnic restaurants	√	√		√	√	√
22. Kim & Jang (2016)	Guangdong, China	Korean restaurant	√	√			√	
23. Seongseop et al (2020)	Hong Kong, China	Local food	√					
24. Kim et al (2020)	Japan	Local food	√	√	√			
25. Lai et al (2018)	Australia	Various ethnic foods	√					√
26. Latiff et al (2019)	Melaka & Georgetown, Malaysia	Local food	√					
27. Lan et al (2012)	Taiwan	Local Hakka restaurant	√					
28. Lee et al (2020)	Korea	Southeast Asian Dish	√					
29. Lin et al (2017)	Hong Kong, China	Cantonese restaurant	√	√	√		√	

30. Madaleno et al (2017)	Portugal	Portuguese local food	√					√
31. Matson-Barkata et al (2018)	Brittany, France	Local restaurants	√				√	
32. Min (2016)	Australia	Korean	√	√	√	√	√	√
33. Min & Han (2017)	Brisbane, Australia	Ethnic (Asian) restaurants	√					√
34. Mohammad & Chan (2011)	Kelantan, Malaysia	Local food	√					
35. Morales & Cordova (2019)	Peru	Local food	√					√
36. Omar et al (2015)	Selangor, Malaysia	Arabic restaurant		√	√		√	
37. Omar et al (2019)	Malaysia	Local food	√					
38. Okumus & Cetin (2018)	Istanbul	Local food	√					
39. Özdemir & Seyitoğlu (2017)	-	-	√	√	√			
40. Pratminingsih et al (2018)	Bandung, Indonesia	Traditional restaurant	√	√	√	√	√	
41. Rachão et al (2019)	-	-	√					√
42. Rockower (2012)	-	-	√					√
43. Ryu & Han (2011)	Seoul, Korea	Upscale restaurant		√	√	√	√	
44. Ryu & Jang (2008)	Korea	Upscale restaurant		√	√	√	√	
45. Sarihati et al (2020)	Bandung, Indonesia	Sundanese restaurant	√	√	√	√	√	
46. Su (2011)	Taiwan	Ethnic restaurant		√	√	√	√	
47. Ting et al (2019)	Malaysia	Dayak food	√					√

48. Ting et al (2016)	Malaysia	Dayak food	√					
49. Tuzunkan & Albayrak (2016)	Istanbul, Turkey	Restaurant		√	√	√	√	
50. Vries & Go (2017)	Netherland	Local restaurant	√	√	√		√	
51. Wen et al (2020)	United States	Ethnic restaurant			√			
52. Wijaya (2019)	Indonesia	Indonesian food	√			√		√
53. Wijaya et al (2016)	Indonesia	Indonesian food	√					
54. Wong & Baldwin (2018)	Hong Kong, China	Ethnic restaurants	√	√	√			
55. Wood & Muñoz (2006)	Australia	Ethnic restaurants						√
56. Youn & Kim (2017)	China	Chinese restaurants	√	√	√			
57. Yousefi & Marzuki (2012)	Penang, Malaysia	-	√					
58. Yu et al (2012)	China	Chinese restaurant	√					
59. Zain et al (2018)	Sabah, Malaysia	Local food	√					√
60. Zhang et al (2019)	China	Local food	√					
Total (60)			48	28	25	11	19	12

The following Diagram 1 shows the frequency of each strategy found throughout the articles that have been reviewed. This summary portrays previous researchers have discovered a pattern of similar findings. As seen in Table 1, out of the six strategies, the strategy that notably accentuates the role of ethnic restaurants in food tourism is by offering authentic and quality menus.
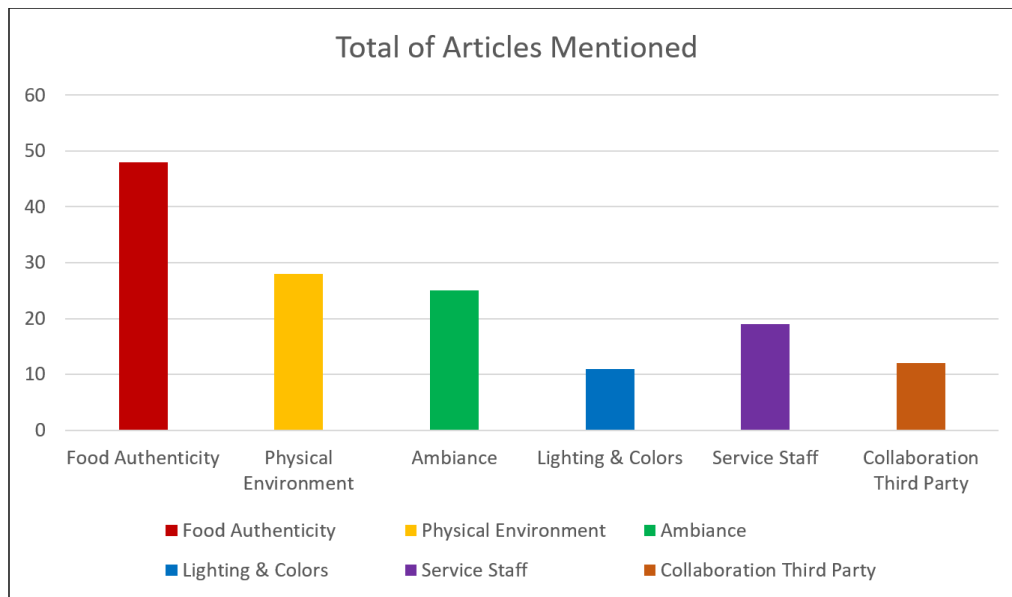
Diagram 1: Summarisation of Articles

Offering Authentic Quality Menu

The authenticity of a restaurant primarily depends on its food presentation (Chhabra et al., 2013). Wong and Baldwin (2018) and Guedes et al (2020) emphasize that offering authentic food is one of the attributes of ethnicity, as food portrays a country's image and culture. Additionally, Khalefa (2015) argued that the food's quality could be interpreted through the menu offering, food presentation, cooking method, distinctive taste, and unique ingredients. This was confirmed by Kim and Jang (2016), who found that customers have higher perceived authenticity when experiencing food with original Korean sauces than the modified ones. Similarly, Lee et al (2020) and Ha (2019) also revealed that ingredients, cooking process, and food presentation significantly influence customers' emotions and have composite effects on perceived ethnic authenticity. This demonstrated that restaurants should provide unique dishes with special names in their native language to emphasize authenticity and to educate customers about the history and origin of the food (Youn & Kim, 2017).

Nevertheless, Yu et al (2020) suggested another way to inject authenticity into ethnic food: by providing handwritten menu cards. Their study shows that using handwritten menu cards is highly authentic and can eventually increase purchase intention. Based on this notion, food quality is seen as crucial as it is one of the main indicators influencing consumer behaviour and the restaurant experience (Mohammad & Chan, 2011). Jang et al (2012) supported this view and concluded that food authenticity is vital in determining customers' emotions and the perceived values of a particular restaurant.

Strengthening Cultural Identity Through Physical Environment

According to research, the specialization of food and dining experiences can play an important role in the overall theming of retail experiences (Borgini et al., 2009). However, despite the importance of the physical environment, its elements have not been empirically examined to any great extent. Bitner (1992) noted that managers continually plan, build, change, and control an organization's physical surroundings, but the impact of a physical design or design change on ultimate consumer satisfaction and behaviour is not fully understood. In addition, Rajpoot (2002) agreed with the above statement by stating that one of the possible reasons

for this confusion could be that, in the first instance, the managers do not understand all aspects of customer expectations about physical environments.

In the same vein, DiPietro and Levitt (2017) and Hernández-Rojas and Huete-Alcocer (2021) argued that a restaurant should serve more than just tasty dishes to provide an amazing dining experience for the customers. In this case, restaurants should improve their physical environment by properly staging the chosen theme, culture, and identity (Kala, 2020). This can be reflected in building and architectural structure, as well as interior design and decoration (Sarihati et al., 2020). Meanwhile, Isfiaty and Darmayanti (2015) debated that attractive decorations or props in an ethnic restaurant are the supporting elements in the physical environment attributes. They found that even in a modern-ethnic restaurant, the props presentation can bring a nostalgic vibe and a sense of originality.

The physical environment is one of the essential factors for ethnic restaurants because customers will usually spend hours dining there. At the same time, they will observe and judge the design and decoration, which also affect behaviour and emotion. For instance, Jang et al (2011), supported by Kim et al (2020), concluded that Chinese restaurants must set the furniture and furnishings according to Chinese style to create a set of positive emotions for the customers who look forward to experiencing a wholesome Chinese culture. This is because customers' experiences can be derived from an engagement with a careful staging of the physical elements of the restaurant environment (Ryu & Jang, 2007).

Creating Harmonious Ambiance
According to Omar et al (2015), the ambiance is substantial to create good branding and image for restaurants to attract customers or tourists. The ambiance is the intangible background factors that affect the non-visual senses, i.e., temperature, scent, and music (Tuzunkan & Albayrak, 2016). The temperature in a restaurant which includes the elements of dining space, food, and staff services, should be among the main concerns in any restaurant, as inappropriate temperature may lead to uncomfortable feelings (Pratminingsih et al., 2018). On the other hand, a pleasant atmosphere will spark positivity in the restaurant. Furthermore, music also affects customers' sensory parts and their behaviour toward the restaurant (Ishak et al., 2020).

Meanwhile, Wen et al (2020) discovered further that music should be in line with the restaurant's theme to provide an authentic dining atmosphere. Concerning this, restaurants should play music related to ethnicity and place of origin to stage a memorable dining experience. By doing this, restaurants can increase customer satisfaction and retain existing customers. Music selection should also be appropriate for the target market to create an enjoyable mood for the customers. The right pitch, volume, and type of music allow customers to relax while enjoying their food. Additionally, among the strategies that can be implemented to enhance customer satisfaction, the ambiance is the least expensive to take care of as the restaurant operators can simply control temperature, scent, and music (Ryu & Jang, 2008).

Using Proper and Suitable Lighting and Colours
Lighting can provide customers warmth and comfort feelings. It plays a pivotal element in creating "wow factors", makes a dining area more attractive and enhances the food

presented to customers. The right and suitable lighting are crucial in increasing customer satisfaction. Every food establishment has different preferences for room lighting (Min, 2016). For example, Ryu and Han (2011) found that high-level lighting is synonymous with fast-food restaurants, while warm or dim lights are preferably used in full-service restaurants to create a romantic and exclusive vibe. In contrast, low-level lighting is associated with a lower level of comfort and mood.

Meanwhile, in terms of choosing the colour palette, ethnic restaurants should focus on colours that boldly depict the represented cultures or ethnicities. For example, red is associated with Chinese culture, and the earthy tone reflects Indian culture. In the same vein, cultural expression through colours could be done through food, whereas retaining the original colours of food will enhance the authenticity of restaurants. For instance, Wijaya (2019) explained that the colour of an Indonesian dish called "*nasi tumpeng kuning*" should only be yellow as it represents royalty and worship for the Hindus. Changing it to other colours is against ancient Hindu beliefs and, therefore will lose its originality.

Providing Quality Services and Improving Performance

Service staff is in a restaurant's front row and has the most interactions with customers. Khalefa (2015) mentioned that employee behaviour is the success factor of ethnic restaurants. Their role should complement the staging of cultural identity in ethnic restaurants through body language, staff attire, personality, ethnicity, language proficiency, and knowledge about the restaurant and its culture (Vries & Go, 2017). The ethnicity of the service staff is also quite important as they portray the restaurant's image. It is not that suitable to have foreigners as service staff as it may jeopardize the whole ambiance of an ethnic restaurant (Lin et al., 2017). Besides, helpful, attractive, kind, and responsible staff will increase customer satisfaction (Kim et al., 2019). For example, the staff offers their kindness by helping to organize splendid parties to celebrate customers' important days or by sharing related cultural knowledge and information with the customers.

Notably, another component that ethnic restaurants can consider to improve their staff's service and performance is attractive attire and role-playing. Su (2011) found that staff attire that is in tune with the restaurant's theme effectively represents the cultural identity and may increase customers' perceived authenticity. For example, the Malays wear their *baju kurung* and *baju Melayu*, while the Indians wear their saree and dhoti. This allows customers to enjoy authentic cultural experiences through their interactions with the service staff wearing traditional attire (Matson-Barkat & Robert-Demondtrond, 2018). Overall, the service staff is part of the restaurant's attributes in providing customers with a good dining experience and instigating strong cultural values in the restaurant environment (Hussain et al., 2018).

Collaboration Projects with The Tourism Stakeholders

Wood and Munoz (2006) explained that, in order to familiarise and immerse the customers and tourists in a memorable dining experience, the restaurants need to collaborate with a third party, such as the tourism stakeholders. Tourism stakeholders and travel agencies should cooperate with ethnic restaurants to provide better services to customers and tourists (Zain et al., 2018). Rachão et al (2019) expressed the same view when they stated that local food establishments should establish relationships with travel agencies to offer culinary tourism opportunities to tourists. This collaboration will benefit the country in many aspects,

e.g., economic, environmental, and social. For example, rural areas can be developed through food-related activities.

Ethnic restaurants can also market themselves through the marketing materials provided by the tourism stakeholders, such as billboards, brochures, guidebooks, booking and tourism websites, as well as in public places like the airport and local markets (Madaleno et al., 2017). This is indeed a win-win situation for all parties. The ethnic restaurants acquire the necessary support and will potentially be occupied with customers, the tourism board obtains customers who need a marketing platform, and the potential tourists will be indulged in an amazing cultural and gastronomic dining experience staged by the ethnic restaurants. In the nutshell, this effort benefits everyone involved.

Conclusion

The food tourism industry in a country can be greatly enhanced through multiple strategies, such as food festivals, events, and homestays that aim to introduce the local cuisine to tourists and foreigners. Ethnic restaurants, being a significant source of local delicacies, hold potential as a marketing tool in the industry. However, merely offering authentic dishes is not enough to fully appreciate the cultural identity they represent. Hence, ethnic restaurants must focus on presenting an appealing and memorable dining experience.

This conceptual paper has presented six different strategies as a comprehensive guideline for restaurant operators to manage the theme, concept, and cultural identity portrayed in their establishments. The strategies are (1) offering an authentic quality menu, (2) strengthening cultural identity through the physical environment, (3) creating a harmonious ambiance, (4) using proper and suitable lighting and colours, (5) providing quality services and improving performance and (6) collaborating with the tourism stakeholders. Despite prior studies on ethnic restaurants and the food tourism industry, little attention has been dedicated to analysing and examining the function and the role of ethnic restaurants in food tourism.

The results of this study have practical implications for both restaurant managers and tourism boards. Firstly, restaurant managers should consider upgrading and stepping up the game by focusing on the cultural identity portrayed in the restaurants in order to penetrate the market. The restaurant's management needs to strengthen its identity through the food served, physical environment, atmosphere, and ambiance. The cultural identity should be effectively presented in a manner that transfers knowledge to tourists and crosses cultural boundaries, making their dining experience memorable. In addition, third-party engagement is also needed to create the opportunity for the ethnic restaurant to be well-known to tourists visiting the country. Meanwhile, tourism boards have a role to play by promoting ethnic restaurants through their tourism plans and marketing efforts.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

The limitations of the narrative review method used in this study include the possibility of subjective selection bias due to a non-predefined search process and the influence of the researcher's experiences on the inclusion of articles for evaluation. Additionally, the quality of non-protocol-based research may be subject to unreliable sources. To address these limitations, it is suggested that future studies gather perspectives from restaurant owners, customers, and tourism management to fully understand the role of ethnic restaurants in the

food tourism industry. This multi-perspective approach would allow restaurant management and tourism stakeholders to effectively strategize and meet the demands of potential customers.

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