

Marketing Environment Analysis: Café Facilities Element Effects on Café's Consumer Behaviour in Selangor, Malaysia

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Abstract

The food service industry has grown rapidly in response to the changing consumer lifestyles. In this regard, the food service industry is highly competitive as the number of new entrants offering inventive food products and services keep on increasing to keep up with the demand for novel food products. Consequently, café operators are focusing on improving their store environment to gain advantage in the competitive industry. Studies have found that store facility can stimulate consumers' emotions, and in turn, significantly increases positive association with the café environment. Owners are also keen to upgrade their café to become a social space or a co-working space to fulfil consumers' needs. This study aims to investigate the impact of various café environment factors on consumer behaviour. The sample for this survey consists of patrons of cafes in Selangor who were selected using purposive sampling technique. Data from 320 questionnaires were analysed by using the Partial Least Square technique was used to analyse. It was found that café results indicated that café design and café cleanliness significantly influences consumer behaviour. The findings indicate that café facilities have a significant positive impact on pleasure, which has a direct, positive influence on consumer behaviour. The mediation result confirms that pleasure mediates the relationship between café facilities and consumer behaviour.

Keywords: Café facilities; Café environment; consumer behaviour; Structural equation modelling (SEM); Partial least squares (PLS); Malaysia.



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1. Introduction

The global food service industry is highly diverse with different food providers offering various food choices and dining experiences to consumers. In exchange, consumers are willing to pay for these services (Edwards and Causa, 2009). According to Agriculture and Agri - Food Canada, food services providers cafes include bars, self - service restaurants, full - service restaurants, home-delivery and take away restaurants, street - kiosks and fast food restaurants. In general, the global food service industry can be classified into two categories, the profit driven business sector and the social driven public sector which considers costs, subsidies and provision of food as a social service.

The global food industry is one of the biggest in the world. In 2016, it was reported to worth \$3.63 trillion (Wire, 2018). In this light, the increase in global population along with increasing incomes in developing countries caused a surge in the demand for prepared food. A report by Technavio reported that Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) will grow by 4.98% 2017-2021 and the food industry may worth up to 9.7 billion by 2050. The change of lifestyle is evident in Malaysia where more consumers prefer to eat out than cook for themselves due to their hectic schedule (AbuThahir and Krishnapillai, 2018).

Furthermore, the Statistics Portal, Statista, reported that the Malaysian Food and Beverages market will gain revenue of US\$268 million in 2019 and by 2023, the projected revenue is US\$520 million, as the CAGR is expected to increase to 18% between 2019-2023. This reflects the increasing demand for foodservices in the country.

In Malaysia, Cafes have becoming more popular due to the younger population and the increasing household income Cafes are typically found in most urban and suburban areas. Most cafes have creative concepts and relaxing ambiance which make them more exclusive and at times, offer more high priced food products than a regular restaurant (Bernson, 2011). Many consumers choose to visit and spend more time socialising and working in cafes as they are located in convenient locations and offer affordable food and beverages in a comfortable environment (AbuThahir and Krishnapillai, 2018). The Malay mail newspaper reported that many users use café as an alternative office or co-working space (Mah, 2017) as they could use the complimentary WiFi to get their job done. Consequently café can be labelled as a 'third place' which indicates public places that people spend most of their time in besides their home and work place (Saey and Foss, 2016).

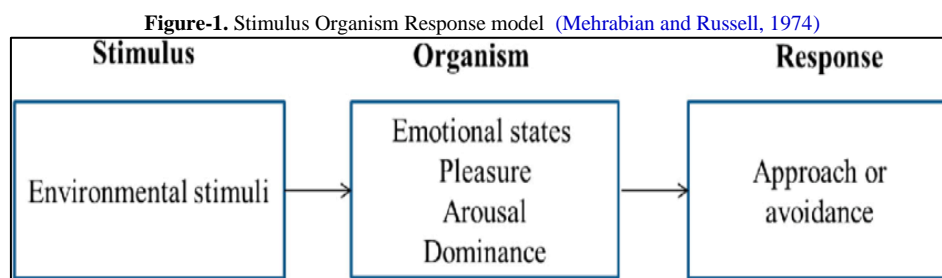
In the meantime, food service providers must make serious efforts to meet customers' preferences by providing a good atmosphere not only for eating place, but also for working and socialising. Aina *et al.* (2016), stated that dine-in patrons will be discouraged from visiting the café when they feel that the cafe environment as unfavourable.

This includes unpleasant smells from dirty restrooms, dirty floor, filthy cutlery, inappropriately placed furniture, and poor or no Wifi service.

For this study, the impact cafe design and cafe cleanliness to consumer behaviour was examined along with cafe facilities. The study also focuses on examining how consumer behaviour is mediated by pleasure. The Stimulus Organism Response model (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974) was adopted as the theoretical framework for this research. This study will fill in the gap of research on the impact of café facilities to consumer behaviour and the mediating role of pleasure. Most past studies have concentrated only on specific dimension of atmosphere rather than simultaneously evaluating different dimensions such as café facilities and café design (AbuThahir and Krishnapillai, 2018). Thus, this research will examine different store environment stimuli and assess their impact on consumer behaviour.

2. Literature Review

Store environments encompass elements that can be integrated to enhance store ambiance. These elements include lighting, music, colour, and scent (Levy and Weitz, 2009). In this light (Olahut *et al.*, 2012), planning a store's environment is important to ensure the success of a business. Most marketing studies that investigated the impacts of environments on consumer behaviour have adopted the seminal conceptualization as suggested (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). There are various models that can be used to explain how individual responses are affected by certain stimulus. One of these models, as suggested by Goi *et al.* (2014), is the traditional S-O-R model which can be used a reference to explain how exposure to a stimulus or a combination of several stimulus could affect one's emotional Responses (Donovan and Rossiter, 1982; Mehrabian and Russell, 1974).



Consumer behaviour is defined by Notion (2011), as specific human actions related to products purchase and services of retailer. In term of food services (Kotler, 1973), posited customers that experience a restaurant's atmosphere through aesthetic combination of colour, lighting, sound through the music genre played and the surrounding noise, tactile or the cleanliness of the restaurant and through olfactory elements such as the smell in the restaurant. Each customer consciously or unconsciously perceives a restaurant atmosphere to determine whether he or she feels comfortable inside the restaurant. Furthermore, each customer will have different preferences based on internal factors such as perception, attitude, and motivation, as well as external factors like family roles, peer influence and social influence (Ha and Maaninen-olsson, 2014).

One of the factors that retailers need to consider to provide a conducive and comfortable environment in a café or store is interior design. Retailers should work with interior designers to find the perfect combination of physical elements such as colour, visual complexity and orderliness that could enhance patrons' convenience, safety, and enjoyment (Chang *et al.*, 2011; Kibler, 2015). In addition, other elements such as lighting and smell can significantly impact how one responds to the interior atmosphere and how they feel towards the restaurant (Modarres Nezhad, 2014). The pleasant mood one associate with the interior store atmosphere influences will in-store attitude, such as the time spent in that store, purchase amount and the customer's intention to revisit (Fisk *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, it is believes that café design plays a crucial role in creating a conducive and comfortable environment in the store. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Café design is positively related to consumer behaviour.

Cleanliness is imperative in the restaurant industry (Yoo, 2012). A restaurant is considered as clean if it does not have rubbish, dust or a bad smell. Cleanliness is crucial as it will impact customers' first impression of the service and quality of service (Vilnai-Yavetz and Gilboa, 2010). Moreover, Hussain and Ali (2015) stated that a store that appear as clean will influence customers' emotion towards the store. In this regard, some studies have examined café cleanliness as part of the restaurant environment (Vilnai-Yavetz and Gilboa, 2010). Based on the discussion above, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Café cleanliness is positively related to consumer behaviour.

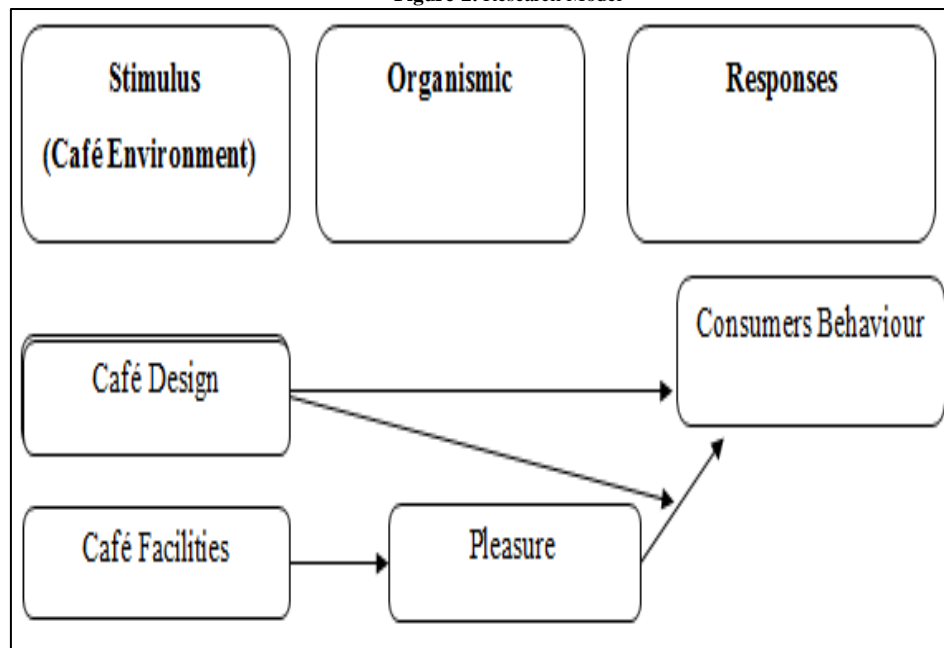
More cafes have started to offer Wi-Fi as a way to attract customers. Having Wifi in the dining area will attract younger customers who rely on it to communicate and socialise. Wifi allows also customers browse the internet, especially the social networking sites that has become a part of their social life (Mustaffa *et al.*, 2011). In this regard, the provision of Wifi will offer convenience for customers who need to be connected to the internet while they are having their meals (Hwa *et al.*, 2011). This is also supported by Cobanoglu *et al.* (2012), who highlighted that providing Wi-Fi in restaurants and cafes can increase patronage to a restaurant. Therefore, providing Wi-Fi Internet access in a café can be a tool that attracts new customers, retains customer loyalty, and increases sales. Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H_{3a}: Café facilities is positively related to pleasure.

H_{3b}: Pleasure is positively related to consumer behaviour.

H_{3c}: The impact of the relationship between café facilities and consumer behaviour is mediated by pleasure. There will be a positive relationship between café employee and pleasure will lead to positive consumer behaviour.

Figure-2. Research Model



3. Method

3.1. Sample and Data Collection

This study was carried out in Selangor. Regular patrons of cafés around Selangor aged 18 and above were approached to participate in this study. Selangor was chosen as it has the highest number of café compared to other states (TripAdvisor, 2019). The respondents of the study were selected through the purposive sampling technique based on their familiarity of the cafes and frequency of visit. G*Power was used as a reference for the sample size. According to the rule of thumb, since the population of Selangor is 6.47 million, the minimum number of samples is 185 respondents. In this light, based on Sekaran and Bougie (2016), a sample size of 30 to 500 is sufficient for research. Hence, the sample size of 400 respondents was selected. However, only 320 questionnaires that had given back and only 312 questionnaires are valid.

The questionnaire was divided to 3 sections, section A (independent variable), section B (demographic profile) and section C (dependent variables). Likert scales and a semantic scale were used in the questions to examine the degree of the respondents' agreement with the statements in the questionnaire. The 5-points Likert scale was used for the items on independent variable, the 9 semantic scales were used for the items on the mediation variable, and the 7-points Likert scale was used for the items on the dependent variables. Three different scales were used in the to reduce the common method bias when the respondents were answering the questionnaire (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003).

A pre-test and a pilot study were executed prior to the actual data collection. A pre-test was used to identify problems, such as unclear wording (Kumar *et al.*, 2013). It involved 6 respondents, 3 lecturers and 3 students from University Malaysia Kelantan. This was followed by a focus group interview with 10 café patrons. A pilot study was also conducted with 40 café patrons. Subsequently, changes were made to the questionnaire based on the feedback. In all 340 set of questionnaires were returned and after the screening and data cleaning process, 312 sets were analysed Partial Least Square technique.

3.2. Measures

The data were gathered in duration of 1 month. Table 1 presents the demographic profile of 312 café patrons who participated in this survey.

Table-1. Summary of respondents' profile (N=312)

Demographic Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Male	127	40.7
	Female	185	59.3
Age	18-26	182	58.3
	27-36	63	20.2
	37-46	51	16.3
	47 and above	16	5.1
Marital Status	Single	215	68.9
	Married	97	31.1
	Divorce	0	0
Races	Malay	262	84.0
	Chinese	26	8.3
	India	19	6.1
	Other	5	1.6
Income	< RM 1,000	176	56.4
	RM 1,001 – RM 2,000	39	12.5
	RM 2,001 – RM 3,000	58	18.6
	< RM 4,000	39	12.5
Occupation	Student	175	56.1
	Private Sector	71	22.8
	Self-employed	16	5.1
	Professional	12	3.8
	Government	37	11.9
	Housewife	1	0.3
Recent Visit	Past one week	197	63.1
	Past two weeks	45	14.4
	A month ago	21	6.7
	More than a month ago	49	15.7
Reason to visit	Food and beverage	225	72.1
	Brand	3	1.0
	Facility	22	7.1
	Café Environment	62	19.9
Frequency of visit	Once a month	101	32.4
	2-3 times a month	88	28.2
	3-4 times a month	32	10.3
	More than 5 times a month	91	29.2

4. Findings

The hypothesis for research was tested through the Partial Least Square (PLS) based on structural equation modelling. In order to determine the significant levels for loading, weights and path coefficients, bootstrapping was run using the SmartPLS 3.0 software a (Ramayah *et al.*, 2014). First the validity and goodness of the measurement model were tested, before examining the relationships outlined by the structural model, based on the two-stage analytical procedure suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988).

4.1. Measurement Model Estimation

The measurement models of all constructs were checked for reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity prior to testing the hypothesised model. According to Hair *et al.* (2014), loadings values that are equal or greater than 0.70 are deemed as acceptable (Liew *et al.*, 2015). The values obtained from the measurement model analysis presented in Table 2 show that all of the loadings are higher than 0.70 while the average variance extracted (AVE) for all constructs are above 0.5 Bagozzi and Yi (1988), while the composite reliability scores (CR) are above 0.7 (Hair *et al.*, 2014). These results reflect the convergent validity of the measurement models.

Table-2. Measurement Model

Construct	Item		Loadings	AVE	CR
Café Design	CD1	The interior design of the café was pleasing to me.	0.862	0.641	0.899
	CD2	I find the colours used in the café well-coordinated.	0.780		
	CD3	The café layout enables consumers to move easily.	0.741		
	CD4	The dimness of the lighting gave me relaxed feeling.	0.808		
	CD5	I find the style of décor/interiors of the café attractive.	0.806		
Café Cleanliness	CC1	The cleanliness of the café increases my perception of the food quality.	0.848	0.703	0.922
	CC2	The cleanliness of the dining set will affect my appetite.	0.849		
	CC3	Pleasant air creates comfortable environment of the café.	0.854		
	CC4	The cleanliness of the café increases my desire to stay longer in the cafe.	0.840		
	CC5	The fact that the cafe is clean and tidy increases my well-being and comfort.	0.800		
Café Facilities	CF1	The café has connection of Wi-Fi.	0.804	0.648	0.880
	CF2	The seats used in the café are comfortable.	0.852		
	CF3	The café has clean restrooms.	0.805		
	CF5	Fully air-conditioned environment makes me comfortable while in the café.	0.757		
Pleasure	Pleasure1	Unhappy/ Happy	0.851	0.765	0.951
	Pleasure2	Annoyed/ Please	0.873		
	Pleasure3	Unsatisfied/ Satisfied	0.904		
	Pleasure4	Melancholic/ Contented	0.876		
	Pleasure5	Despairing/ Hopeful	0.853		
	Pleasure6	Bored/ Entertain	0.887		
Consumer Behaviour	CB1	It's a nice experience to spend my time in a café with a good environment.	0.898	0.745	0.936
	CB2	I am more likely to dine again at this café next time.	0.834		
	CB3	When I feel satisfied with the environment in the café, I will say positive things about it to others.	0.861		
	CB4	I would like to spend more money on a good environment of café.	0.822		
	CB5	I would encourage my friends and family to visit a good environment café.	0.898		

** CD= Café Design; CC= Café Cleanliness; CF= Café facilities; CB= Consumer Behaviour**

In the meantime, [Table 3](#) presents the results for the discriminant validity test. According to [Fornell and Cha \(1994\)](#), and [Fornell and Larcker \(1981\)](#), the AVE of each construct should be higher than the correlation between it and any other constructs in the model. In the meantime ([Henseler et al., 2015](#)), suggested the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations as an alternative measure to determine discriminant validity and as shown [Table III](#), all of the constructs met the criterion which indicate that they have discriminant validity. In this regard, according to [Kline \(2011\)](#), any value lesser than 0.85 indicates that there is discriminant validity.

Table-3. Discriminant Validity

	Cafe Cleanliness	Cafe Design	Cafe Facilities	Consumer Behaviour	Pleasure
Cafe Cleanliness					
Cafe Design	0.604				
Cafe Facilities	0.595	0.707			
Consumer Behaviour	0.532	0.562	0.532		
Pleasure	0.483	0.505	0.570	0.492	

As shown in Table 4 the loadings of all constructs fulfil this criterion, hence it could be concluded that the constructs show discriminant validity.

Table-4. Cross Loading

	Cafe Design	Cafe Cleanliness	Cafe Facilities	Pleasure	Consumer Behaviour
CD1	0.862	0.488	0.557	0.455	0.490
CD2	0.780	0.364	0.446	0.307	0.363
CD3	0.741	0.390	0.435	0.290	0.329
CD4	0.808	0.431	0.460	0.391	0.437
CD5	0.806	0.451	0.473	0.374	0.394
CC1	0.511	0.848	0.473	0.359	0.425
CC2	0.444	0.849	0.426	0.386	0.390
CC3	0.429	0.854	0.423	0.417	0.367
CC4	0.445	0.840	0.451	0.373	0.434
CC5	0.405	0.800	0.363	0.323	0.419
CF1	0.429	0.348	0.804	0.400	0.288
CF2	0.534	0.402	0.852	0.393	0.432
CF3	0.538	0.444	0.805	0.400	0.359
CF5	0.417	0.446	0.757	0.417	0.410
Pleasure1	0.401	0.399	0.434	0.851	0.453
Pleasure2	0.414	0.386	0.436	0.873	0.366
Pleasure3	0.423	0.421	0.437	0.904	0.401
Pleasure4	0.394	0.360	0.404	0.876	0.384
Pleasure5	0.362	0.376	0.433	0.853	0.410
Pleasure6	0.426	0.375	0.479	0.887	0.388
CB1	0.477	0.489	0.415	0.418	0.898
CB2	0.487	0.406	0.441	0.444	0.834
CB3	0.412	0.402	0.374	0.339	0.861
CB4	0.344	0.329	0.361	0.373	0.822
CB5	0.458	0.457	0.399	0.397	0.898

** CD= Café Design; CC= Café Cleanliness; CF= Café facilities; CB= Consumer Behaviour**

4.2. Structural Model Estimation

A bootstrapping procedure with 5000 resamples was conducted to generate t-values to estimate the structural model. The structural model is presented in Figure 3 while Table 5 shows the results of the hypothesis testing. As shown in Table V, there is a positive relationship ($\beta = 0.278$, $p < 0.01$) between Café Design and Consumer Behaviour. Café Cleanliness is also positively related ($\beta = 0.240$, $p < 0.01$) to Consumer Behaviour, as well as Café Facilities and Pleasure ($\beta = 0.501$, $p < 0.01$). This explains 25.1% variance. Moreover, pleasure is positively related to consumer behaviour with ($\beta = 0.224$, $p < 0.01$), explaining 36.2% of the variance. Thus, H_1 , H_2 , H_{3a} and H_{3b} were supported.

Meanwhile, to test the fifth hypothesis, H_{3c} , (Preacher and Hayes, 2004;2008) method of bootstrapping indirect effect was used. The result of the bootstrapping analysis of the indirect effect $\beta = 0.112$ (0.501×0.224) is significant with a t-value of 3.264. In this light, Preacher and Hayes (2008) suggested that the indirect effect 0.112, 95% Boot CI: [LL = 0.049, UL = 0.183] does not straddle a 0 between the indicating mediation. Thus, it can be concluded that the effect of mediation is statistically significant and that H_{3c} was supported.

Figure-3. Structural Model

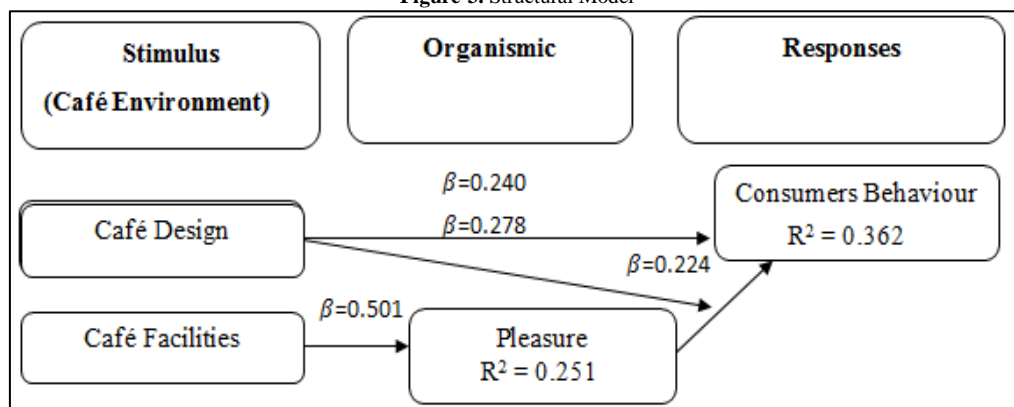


Table-5. Results of the hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Std Beta	Std Error	T-Values	LL	UL	Decision
H ₁	Café Design → Consumer Behaviour	0.278	0.057	4.902**	0.169	0.392	Supported
H ₂	Café Cleanliness → Consumer Behaviour	0.240	0.057	4.228**	0.130	0.354	Supported
H _{3a}	Café Facilities → Pleasure	0.501	0.044	11.500**	0.416	0.587	Supported
H _{3b}	Pleasure → Consumer Behaviour	0.224	0.062	3.637**	0.105	0.344	Supported
H _{3c}	Café Facilities → Pleasure → Consumer Behaviour	0.112	0.034	3.264**	0.049	0.183	Supported

5. Conclusion

5.1. Theoretical Implications

The study has explored the impact of associated meaning of cafe facilities in the context of the food industry and the findings of this study can fill the gap of the existing literature on aspects like café facilities. Other studies have mainly focused on atmospheric stimuli as music, scent, and lighting or the atmospheric effects of overall ambient and design factors (Lin and Liang, 2011), as well as the impact of café design and café cleanliness on the emotion of consumers (Crowley, 1993; Labrecque *et al.*, 2013). Thus, this research simultaneously evaluated the café design, café cleanliness and café facilities in the marketing contexts to fill the gap of studies on the link between café facilities and consumer behaviour, as well as the mediating role of.

This study will also contribute to the existing literature related in-store consumer psychology. This is because this study focuses on how café facilities influence consumer behaviour and embarked on an empirically elaboration on the positive interactions between café facilities and pleasure felt by patrons as they spend time in the café.

The study found a significant link between café design, café cleanliness and consumer behaviour which is in-line with previous research. In addition, all of the hypotheses on the predicted roles of pleasure were found to be statistically significant. Therefore, it could conclude that the facilities offered by the café are also one important aspect of the store environment that increase the pleasure of the café patrons and can influence positive behaviour among them.

5.2. Managerial Implications

This study's findings have shown the importance of providing an attractive café environment as it could encourage positive purchase behaviour among café patrons. As youths and the younger generation are the most frequent patrons of cafes, café operators need to create an attractive atmosphere in their cafés. For instance, using trendy colour scheme and lighting such as silver, metallic and electric blue to create a modern ambiance and to maintain the cleanliness of the café as patrons like to spend more time in the café. Furthermore, as cafe patrons prefer café with Wifi facility, café operators need to ensure that their café offer stable and high-speed free Wifi connection. The findings also show that the patrons prefer cafes with aesthetic values, hence, the inclusion of attractive wall paints, flooring, carpeting and colourful wall decoration that suit the café theme could enhance patrons' positive behaviour (Tom *et al.*, 1987).

6. Limitation and Suggestion for Future Research

As this research was conducted using the quantitative research method, it has provided sufficient information on the contextual factors that influence consumers' positive purchase behaviour. It will provide a deeper understanding on this aspect as it explains the variations of customers' preferences. However, as quantitative research focuses on testing hypotheses instead of generating hypotheses, there are some parts of the actual store atmosphere that affect customers' behaviour that might be left out. Therefore, it is suggested that future researchers could adopt the mixed - method research approach or a qualitative research method approach which allows respondents to provide a richer detailed description of their personal experiences to further understand the issue being studied.

Another limitation of this study is that as it is a cross-sectional study, it assessed only one situation at a time. As customers may feel different emotions when dining in the cafe based various internal and external factors, this cross-sectional study could only focus on limited time factor and its impact on the variables as a whole. To overcome this limitation, longitudinal studies can be conducted to create a better understanding of the café patrons' behaviour when they are dining in the café as well as to predict their behaviour over time. It is also suggested that the theoretical framework is validated at different times.

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