

INDIAN MUSLIM RESTAURANT DINE OUT FREQUENCY: MALAYSIAN DEMOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: Dine-out frequency is the fundamental measure of footfall in a food service eateries. Indian Muslim restaurant (IMR) in Malaysia remains the popular hangout place and food-away-from-home choice among Malaysians. The unique IMR eateries well blended with the culture of Malaysian food, traditions, and Malaysian multicultural society identity. This eaterie is continuing mushrooming around the country and flourish the foodservice industry. Despite, numerous research focusing on success factors, contribution to gastronomic, and management. However, a little study exploring the diners' primary demographic in this highly valued eateries. Therefore, this paper seeks to unveil the basic demographic profile in the IMR sector. The results provide rudimentary diners segmentation insights in the Malaysian context and benefits to a new venture and quantifiable insights to foodservice entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Dine Out Frequency, Indian Muslim Restaurant, Foodservice, Demographic

Introduction

Diners' demographic profile is equally pivotal in formulating a marketing strategy that in line with the factor that yield repeats purchase and dining satisfaction (Christia, & Ard, 2016). Indian Muslim restaurant or known as "Mamak" in Malaysia is the well-recognized Indian ethnic foodservice in Malaysia. Also, it is reputable internationally in culinary tourism (Omar, & Omar, 2018) that operates 24 hours 7 days. Multiethnic Malaysian are cohesive through the Mamak food culture where many studies in the past focusing the role of Mamak and culture (Olmedo, & Shamsul, 2016), success factor (Othman, Kandasamy, Bakar, & Chua, 2018), business strategy (Salleh, Rosdi, Othman, & Radzi, 2016), and extensive research focusing on the dietary or weight management association with frequency of dining out (Pell et al., 2016) hence diminutive studies that explore the dine-out frequency in the Malaysian Mamak restaurant from diners basic demographic. Therefore, at present study attempt to explore the basic demographic data that not sensitive and easy to be obtained. The study results will assist in formulating foodservice strategy and indicate that useful in plain value-added services to

promo experiential dining journey through demographic touchpoint of interest were gender, ethnic group, educational level, marital status, and occupation.

Literature Review

Relevant Theoretical Assumption

The ultimate business venture objective is eyeing on profit. Diners demographic is useful in building the capabilities and creating targeted strategy delicately to the different segments. Warde and Martens (2000) postulated that eating out is essential for pleasure, leisure, and basic necessity that evolve to meet esteem, social, and physiological needs. Akbay, Tiryaki & Gul (2007) study unveiled the frequency of fast food consumption is significantly influenced by age, income, presence of children, and educational level also the household size. Diner's demographic analysis identify exactly the customer segment and enable the restaurant operator to cluster them into a highly specific group and devotes its resource to delight the diners. Also, it helps to uncover the full truth about the diner's needs. Notably, the patrons' demographic profile is rudimentary to any small-medium food operators.

Maslow's theory is advocating different life cycles posit different needs where the grouping of the similar characteristic customer together to execute practical, motivational mechanics to foster desired behavior (Fallatah, & Syed, 2018). Need for food, and beverages are the physiological needs that needed for survival where dining out is the superior level that seeking self-esteem needs or hedonic needs. (Martens, 2000). Maslow's theory set an essential platform to facilitate the demographic more effectively. Ncube and Letsoalo (2019) utilized Maslow's theory in understanding the satisfaction of foodservice in hospitals from male and female patients' perspectives to improve its foodservice management. This heritage theory is still prevalent in social science research that aims to understand customer segmentation. Therefore, the present study positioning itself in creating a diners segmentation approach that better respond to the changing needs of the Malaysian diners hence contributes to customer segmentation approaches to fulfill needs ahead market trend.

Diner Demographic

Gender

Past studies revealed that gender portrays dine-out frequency differently. Binkley (2006) showed that American female is less likely to dine-out. This is consistent with the study by Zang et al., (2018) in China found that males eat out more than females. However, an exciting finding from a study in Taiwan revealed that married female with kids usually dominates the dine-out decision making in the family (Chen, Lehto, Behnke, & Tang, 2016). Moreover, the food choice decision making is varied between male and female in the dine-out occasion and react differently with food calories level where male participants showed a general preference for low calories food compared to women (Manippa, Padulo, van der Laan, & Brancucci, 2017). These studies demonstrated male and female behave differently and posit different consumption patterns and preferences. According to Bhuyan (2011), less health-conscious people tend to eat out more regularly than less health- conscious people.

Marital Status

Another manifest that influences the dine-out frequency is the status of the marriage. Particularly, married females more likely to control the household members' in-take of food that affects health (Umberson, 1992). However, an interesting study found that middle-income parents perceived that eating out is more cost-effective as there were many "kids eat free or

half-price” restaurant or promotional activities available (Robson, Crosby, & Stark, 2016). Double shuddering parents with dual-income tend to eat more as they perceived eating out is the perfect solution in dealing with everyday work burden conversely, the unmarried individual is more prone to dine-out (Ali & Nath, 2013). However, a very little study in the case of marital status and the association with dine-out frequency in Malaysian *Mamak* restaurant.

Education Level

Foodservice research revealed that the education level of diners was able to influence the expectation toward food and beverage quality (Zheng, 2010). Also, educated diners are more analytical and conscious about food intake outside the home impact on health (Alimi & Workneh, 2016). Nevertheless, in the marketing communication context, consumers were increasing their expectations toward the goods and services that they learned through advertisement. Araya, Elberg, Noton, and Schwartz (2018) study discovered that more educated consumers were more sensitive to nutritional labels on food products. Educated consumers might have the higher expectation to the service that offered by any food eateries, therefore, managing or clustering educated consumers is paramount important as the educated consumer has a higher tendency in making complaints than non-educated consumers (Ngai, Heung, Wong, & Chan, (2007).

Occupation

The role of a person in an organization assumes the responsibilities and tasks that need to be carried out to achieve business objectives. A person's lifestyle might be influenced by the nature of different occupations especially in sales and marketing roles, a career in public relations or managerial job that attributes to more people interaction that requires socialization (Vlismas, Stavrinou, & Panagiotakos, 2009). Bonnell et al., (2017) revealed that employees work in the day and night shift personnel share different eating behavior were night shift personnel less like to intake healthy food.

Ethnic Group

Malaysia comprises three major ethnic groups, namely Malay, Chinese and Indian, that practicing unique food culture, respectively. A recent study in Indian that exploring the factor influence dine-out frequency revealed two significant reasons were people do not want to cook at home, and wish to explore new restaurants (Mohan, Gunasekar, & Gupta, 2016). Study in China; Shanghai found that male eat out more than females (Zang et al., 2018). However, the divers' ethnic food culture in Malaysia cultivated a new impetus to dine-out more frequently.

Research Methodology

300 respondents were selected through quota sampling because it allowed the sample respondents to be proportionally divided according to Malaysia's three major ethnic groups, these ethnic groups play a major role in Malaysia's foodservice sector. Proportionate of Malay (179), Chinese (82) and Indians (38) were recruited. A self-administrated questionnaire was distributed outside the Indian Muslim restaurant were approaching those diners who were walking in or out after their dining. This approach allowed the researcher to select respondents advantageously, i.e. those who were suitable to provide the information required for the study (Keratepe and Uludag, 2008). Data obtained were analyzed using a cross-tabulation method to cluster the data into meaningful segmentation.

Table 1. Quota Sampling

Ethnic Group	Selangor Population ('000)	Contribution Percentage (%)	Proportionate Sample Size
Bumiputera	3,383.70	60%	179
Chinese	1,553.00	27%	83
Indians	721.2	13%	38
Sub-total	5,657.90	100%	300
Others	44.8	NIL	NIL
Non-Malaysian citizens	678.2		
Total	6,380.80		

Source: Department of Statistics, Malaysia (2017)

Results of The Study

Relationships between Respondents' Profiles and Dining Out Frequency Behaviour

The present study also ran a cross-tabulation. A cross-tabulation is where a joint frequency distribution of cases, based on two or more variables with the chi-square statistic (χ^2), examines whether the variables are statistically independent or associated with each other. In this study, dine out frequency was the fundamental that rooted the research problem. Hence, the frequency of dining out was examined or cross-tabulated with the other potentially relevant factors such as gender, marital status, ethnic group, educational level and occupation. This calculation provided a general background of the relationships between dine out frequency and the respondents' profiles. Only variables that were significantly associated at a precision level of 0.05 have been discussed here.

The relationship between gender and dining out frequency (Table 2) showed the interesting result that females dined out more frequently than males, as indicated by 56.3% for females versus 43.7% for males. This is probably due to the increase in the number of Malaysian working women (Ortega, Abdullah, Ahmad & Ibrahim, 2013; Tan, 2010). However, males dined out more than three times in a day (88.9%). Presumably, the male dining out frequency being more than the females' is related to physical appearance or lifestyle where obese males tend to eat out more than obese females (Tan, 2014).

Table 2. Relationship Between Gender and Dining Out Frequency Behaviour

		Average Dining Out Frequency in a Week					
		One meal	Two meals	Three meals	More than three meals	Total	
Gender	Male	Count	53	51	19	8	131
		% within gender	40.50%	38.90%	14.50%	6.10%	100.00%
		% within dine out frequency	37.30%	43.60%	59.40%	88.90%	43.70%
		Count	89	66	13	1	169
	Female	% within gender	52.70%	39.10%	7.70%	0.60%	100.00%
		% within dine out frequency	37.30%	43.60%	59.40%	88.90%	43.70%

		Average Dining Out Frequency in a Week				
		One meal	Two meals	Three meals	More than three meals	Total
Total	% within dine out frequency	62.70%	56.40%	40.60%	11.10%	56.30%
	Count	142	142	117	32	300
	% within gender	47.30%	47.30%	39.00%	10.70%	100.00%
	% within dine out frequency	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
			Chi-Square Tests		Asymptotic Significance	
		Value		df	(2-sided)	
Pearson Chi-Square		13.015a		3	.005	
Likelihood Ratio		13.659		3	.003	
Linear-by-Linear Association		10.958		1	.001	
N of Valid Cases		300				

Note: One cell (12.5%) has an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.93.

Relationship Between Marital Status and Dining Out Frequency Behaviour

Examining the association between dine out frequency and marital status, the results (see Table 3) showed that singles accounted for 72% and married diners, merely 25%. Most of the singles dined out for at least one meal a day (46.8%). This finding supported a past study's results that single persons have more socialisation opportunities to dine out (Stewart, Blisard, Bhuyan, & Nayga, 2004). This is probably due to the fact that it is more convenient for single individuals to have their food away from home (Kalita & Sarma, 2017).

The results indicated that having food away from food was most common, with 47.3% of respondents dining out at least once a day. This finding was supported by a recent study in Malaysia by Latimaha, Bahari and Ismail (2018), who revealed that the rapidly growing behaviour of having food away from home regardless of ethnicity or income in major Malaysian cities is because of households with children.

Table 3. Relationship Between Marital Status and Dining Out Frequency Behaviour

		Average Dining Out Frequency in a Week				
		One meal	Two meals	Three meals	More than three meals	Total
Marital Status	Count	101	90	23	2	216
	% within marital status	46.80%	41.70%	10.60%	0.90%	100.00%
	% within dine out frequency	71.10%	76.90%	71.90%	22.20%	72.00%
	Count	39	25	7	4	75
	% within marital status	52.00%	33.30%	9.30%	5.30%	100.00%
	% within dine out frequency	27.50%	21.40%	21.90%	44.40%	25.00%

		Average Dining Out Frequency in a Week				
		One meal	Two meals	Three meals	More than three meals	Total
Other	Count	2	2	2	3	9
	% within marital status	22.20%	22.20%	22.20%	33.30%	100.00%
	% within dine out frequency	1.40%	1.70%	6.30%	33.30%	3.00%
Total	Count	142	117	32	9	300
	% within marital status	47.30%	39.00%	10.70%	3.00%	100.00%
	% within dine out frequency	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
		Chi-Square Tests		Asymptotic Significance		
		Value	df	(2-sided)		
Pearson Chi-Square		36.534a	6	0.000		
Likelihood Ratio		18.985	6	0.004		
Linear-by-Linear Association		5.463	1	0.019		
N of Valid Cases		300				
Note: Five cells (41.7%) have expected counts of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 0.27.						

Relationship Between Respondents' Educational Level and Dining Out Frequency Behaviour

Sixty-eight per cent of the respondents held a college or university degree. Therefore, it was interesting to explore whether educated respondents had a higher tendency to dine out because Knight, Worosz, and Todd's (2009) study showed that higher-educated persons tend to eat out more often than lower-educated respondents. Nevertheless, the results in Table 4 did not support Knight, Worosz, and Todd's (2009) findings as the Person Chi-Squared statistic was not significant at a level of 0.05. In the Malaysian context, eating out is prevalent as Malaysia is well-known as a food paradise among both locals and tourists (Jalis, Che, & Markwell, 2014). Presumably, the wide variety of food outlets encourages them to dine out more often.

Table 0. Relationship Between Respondents' Educational Level and Dining Out Frequency Behaviour

		Average Dining Out Frequency in a Week					
			One meal	Two meals	Three meals	More than three meals	Total
Education Level	High School or Less	Count	49	36	8	3	96
		% within education level	51.0%	37.5%	8.3%	3.1%	100.0%
		% within dine out frequency	34.5%	30.8%	25.0%	33.3%	32.0%
	College or More	Count	93	81	24	6	204

		Average Dining Out Frequency in a Week				
		One meal	Two meals	Three meals	More than three meals	Total
Total	% within education level	45.6%	39.7%	11.8%	2.9%	100.0%
	% within dine out frequency	65.5%	69.2%	75.0%	66.7%	68.0%
	Count	142	117	32	9	300
	% within education level	47.3%	39.0%	10.7%	3.0%	100.0%
	% within dine out frequency	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
			Chi-Square Tests		Asymptotic Significance	
		Value	df	(2-sided)		
Pearson Chi-Square		1.220a	3	.748		
Likelihood Ratio		1.247	3	.742		
Linear-by-Linear Association		.779	1	.377		
N of Valid Cases		300				

Note: One cell (12.5%) has an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.88.

Relationship Between Respondents' Occupations and Dining Out Frequency

As 65% of the respondents were non-executive or blue-collar workers, comparing their dining out frequencies with a past study's result (Lee & Tan, 2007) was intriguing. Lee & Tan (2007) found that educational level is not statistically significant in explaining dining out frequency; conversely, nutritional awareness or lifestyles affected dining out frequency in Malaysian society. In the context of the present study, the respondents' occupation levels were not associated with dining out frequencies at a precision level of 0.05 (see Table 5). Such a scenario occurs mainly due to urbanisation, according to Tan (2014). Also, research conducted by Tan (2010) discovered that, compared to rural residents, the likelihood of heads of urban households dining out is higher.

Table 5. Relationship Between Respondents' Occupations and Dining Out Frequency

		Average Dining Out Frequency in a Week					
		One meal	Two meals	Three meals	More than three meals	Total	
Occupation	Executive	Count	23	18	4	0	45
		% within occupation	51.1%	40.0%	8.9%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within dine out frequency	16.2%	15.4%	12.5%	0.0%	15.0%
	Non-executive	Count	10	13	2	1	26
		% within occupation	38.5%	50.0%	7.7%	3.8%	100.0%
		% within dine out frequency	7.0%	11.1%	6.3%	11.1%	8.7%
		Count	19	10	5	0	34

Total	Other	% within occupation	55.9%	29.4%	14.7%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within dine out frequency	13.4%	8.5%	15.6%	0.0%	11.3%
		Count	90	76	21	8	195
		% within occupation	46.2%	39.0%	10.8%	4.1%	100.0%
		% within dine out frequency	63.4%	65.0%	65.6%	88.9%	65.0%
		Count	142	117	32	9	300
		% within occupation	47.3%	39.0%	10.7%	3.0%	100.0%
		% within dine out frequency	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		Chi-Square Tests				Asymptotic Significance	
			Value	df	(2-sided)		
	Pearson Chi-Square		6.863a	9	.651		
	Likelihood Ratio		9.128	9	.426		
	Linear-by-Linear Association		1.003	1	.317		
N of Valid Cases		300					

Note: Six cells (37.5%) have expected counts of less than 5. The minimum expected count is .78.

Relationships Between Ethnicity and Dining Out Frequency

Malaysia is a multi-racial country, comprising 68.8% Malays, 23.2% Chinese, 7% Indians, and 1% Others (Department of Statistics, Malaysia, 2018). Tan (2010) stated that dining out is a normal phenomenon in Malaysian society irrespective of the ethnic group. Remarkably, this study showed that respondents from different ethnic backgrounds behaved significantly differently in dining frequency practices. Relatively, the Malays dined out more frequently than other ethnic groups. For example, 66.7% of the Malay respondents dined out for more than three meals weekly compared to 11.1% and 22.2% of the Chinese and Indians respectively (see Table 6). This new insight could be fascinating to investigate further as past literature has revealed that there is a significant difference between Chinese and Malays where the Chinese community tended to dine out more frequently than Malays (Latimaha, Bahari & Ismail, 2018). This new finding could be due to the government's efforts in increasing disposable income by imposing minimum wages in the country.

Table 6. Relationships Between Ethnicity and Dining Out Frequency

		Average Dining Out Frequency in a Week					
		One meal	Two meals	Three meals	More than three meals	Total	
Ethnic Group	Chinese	Count	86	70	17	6	179
		% within ethnic group	48.0%	39.1%	9.5%	3.4%	100.0%
		% within dine out frequency	60.6%	59.8%	53.1%	66.7%	59.7%
		Count	31	38	13	1	83
	Malay	Count	10	10	1	0	21

Total	Indian	% within ethnic group	37.3%	45.8%	15.7%	1.2%	100.0%
		% within dine out frequency	21.8%	32.5%	40.6%	11.1%	27.7%
		Count	25	9	2	2	38
		% within ethnic group	65.8%	23.7%	5.3%	5.3%	100.0%
		% within dine out frequency	17.6%	7.7%	6.3%	22.2%	12.7%
		Count	142	117	32	9	300
		% within ethnic group	47.3%	39.0%	10.7%	3.0%	100.0%
		% within dine out frequency	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		Chi-Square Tests					Asymptotic Significance
							(2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square		12.593a	6	.050			
Likelihood Ratio		12.899	6	.045			
Linear-by-Linear Association		.300	1	.584			
N of Valid Cases		300					

Note: Three cells (25.0%) have expected counts of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.14.

Conclusion

IMR foodservice needs to understand its diner basic demographic profiles; it is crucial to give attention to the in tandem with the change of demographic profiles such as marital status where single eat-out more than married individuals. Therefore, the daily footfall may probably be contributed by a single individual instead of a household. Malaysian education level has been rising over the past where such phenomena foster the supply of white-collar and cultivated the eating-out habit, to safeguard and manage the expectation of educated diners IMR operator shall look into the food quality rigorously. Noticeable improvement in Malaysian women's status in private and public workforce that enable them to excel themselves through the freedom to acquire education and employment. Hence, the double shouldering of working women tends to eat out more.

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