A bite of nostalgia: The influence of nostalgia in consumers' loyalty intentions at traditional restaurants

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A Bite of Nostalgia: the influence of nostalgia in consumers' loyalty intentions at traditional restaurants

ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the role of nostalgia in influencing consumers' loyalty intentions at traditional restaurants in China. Data was collected from 1082 consumers at three representative traditional restaurants in Yangzhou, China. They were then screened and analysed through SPSS and structural equation modelling. The results revealed that consumers who feel more nostalgic at traditional restaurants tend to perceive higher value of their dining experience, which in turn lead to higher loyalty intentions. The study also confirmed the positive effects of restaurant food, environment and service on triggering consumers' nostalgia at traditional restaurants. Moreover, both theoretical and managerial implications are provided.

Key words: nostalgia; perceived value; loyalty intention; traditional restaurants

1 INTRODUCTION

Traditional food is a type of local food enjoying a relatively long history among local food products in the area, reflecting the local traditional food culture and local community identity (Fernandez-Ferrin et al., 2018; Pieniak et al., 2009). To preserve and develop traditional food, policy supports are noted globally across different countries. In particular, French government revealed an initiative in preserving and safeguarding the traditional food through commissioning a list of the culinary heritage of the French provinces with granted quality classification, which also includes one hundred sites certified as outstanding for their food (Bessiere, 1998). The European Union has released regulations defining the standards for a designation under different collective trademarks to enable traditional food products to be better promoted and differentiated on the market (Pieniak et al., 2009). Similarly, in China, a group of traditional food producers and restaurants have been awarded a designation of 'Time-honoured Brand' by the Chinese government to assists in their rejuvenation and development (Ma et al., 2017; Chen & Huang, 2020). However, despite the support received from the government, in order to keep long-term profitability and survivability, traditional restaurants need to focus on how to retain the existing consumers and enhance their loyalty (Verma & Rajendran, 2017).

As an indispensable part of Chinese culture, traditional restaurants are recognised for its strong historical, cultural and economic value (Chen & Huang, 2020). Chinese traditional restaurants are confirmed playing a significant role in promoting the uniqueness of local food culture and heritage through offering authentic traditional food to consumers (Youn et al., 2019). Tourists are likely to feel nostalgic at the heritage sites due to its close connection with the past (Goulding, 2001). In addition, based on the close bond shown between food consumption and nostalgia (Vignolles & Pichon, 2014), traditional restaurants are inferred to create a nostalgic atmosphere and evoke precious memories for consumers.

The emotional component of consumers' hospitality experience is in direct correlation with their loyalty intentions (Su et al., 2016). Nostalgia can be a powerful stimulus that can influence people's loyalty intention (Chen et al., 2014; Leong et al., 2015). Hwang and Hyun (2013) confirmed the value of nostalgia in stimulating consumers' revisit intentions in the context of luxury restaurant. Chen et al (2014) indicated positive impacts of nostalgia on consumption intention at nostalgic-themed restaurants. There are a growing number of hospitality studies (Chen et al., 2014; Hwang & Hyun, 2013; Li et al., 2019) noting the value of nostalgia in enhancing business revenues and profits. Li et al. (2019) suggested that restaurants should seize the opportunity to enable consumers obtain a nostalgic sense of attachment to the restaurant brand, which in turn translates into loyalty intentions.

Nevertheless, the role of nostalgia in the context of traditional restaurants remains relatively unexplored. No previous study has examined what factors of the traditional restaurants induce consumers to feel nostalgia, not alone the relationships between restaurant-related factors, nostalgia, perceived value, and loyalty intentions. Whether the traditional restaurants should retain the traditional food products, environment, and staff structure needs to be further examined. Consequently, it is crucial for traditional restaurants to examine the role of nostalgia in influencing consumers' future patronage. Understanding what restaurant attributes could induce consumers' nostalgia and how individuals' nostalgia influences their loyalty intentions offers insights for traditional restaurants on how to effectively use nostalgia in their marketing efforts.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to assess the role of nostalgia in influencing

consumers' loyalty intentions at traditional restaurants. More specifically, this study seeks to (1) investigates the importance of different restaurant-related factors in triggering consumers' nostalgia and (2) examines how nostalgia influences consumers' loyalty intentions at traditional restaurants.

This research makes both theoretical and managerial contributions. First, this study offers a nuanced understanding of the relationships among restaurant-related factors, nostalgia, perceived value, and loyalty intentions, which facilitates the understanding of the role of nostalgia on consumers' loyalty intentions. Second, this study adds to existing work by assessing the importance of different factors in relation to the traditional restaurants that induce consumers to feel nostalgic. No previous research has revealed what factors trigger consumers to feel nostalgic at traditional restaurants. Third, this study assists restaurant managers in gaining insights into the importance of nostalgia as a marketing tool, and provides pragmatic advice to restaurant mangers in using nostalgic stimuli in goods and service marketing to excel in business performance.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW & HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMNET
2.1 Nostalgia and its triggers
Nostalgia is a type of psychological phenomenon triggered by both objective and subjective perceptions (Davis, 1979). The term 'nostalgia' consists of two Greek words: 'nóstos' and 'álgos', referring to a sentimental longing for the past (Hwang & Hyun, 2013). The concept of nostalgia has its origin in medicine where it was a medical condition analogous to homesickness (Kessous & Roux, 2008; Hofer, 1934). The meaning of nostalgia was later broadened to reflect sociological phenomenon, encompassing more than just homesickness (Davis, 1979). However, it is still difficult to reach an agreement on the definition of nostalgia. Nostalgia has been claimed as an evocation (Davis, 1979), a preference (Holbrook & Schindler, 1991), an emotion (Holak & Havlena, 1998), a mood (Lee, 2015), and a psychological phenomenon (Chen et al., 2014). Despite this, a common theme shared by those definitions is the positive emotions associated with objects, places, people, experiences and ideas from the past (Holak & Havlena, 1998; Holbrook & Schindler, 2003), which make nostalgia likely to influence consumer behaviours and consumer satisfaction.

To conceptualise nostalgia from the perspective of branding and marketing, this study adopted Baker and Kennedy's (1994) definition- "a sentimental or bittersweet yearning for an experience, product, or service from the past". The source of nostalgia is not limited to one's own past experiences, but also includes things for which a felt longing exists (Leong et al., 2015). Stern (1992) and Batcho (1995) enhanced that nostalgia can be initiated by direct experience, as well as by indirect, imaged experience. The vicarious nostalgia is a romanticised way to view a past without personally experiencing it (Leong et al., 2015; Merchant & Rose, 2013). Nostalgia recollect individual's comfort through reconnecting oneself to the past (Stern, 1992).

According to Stern (1992), nostalgia can be categorised into two types, namely, "historical nostalgia" and "personal nostalgia". Historical nostalgia, composed of stimulated nostalgia and collective nostalgia, deals with circumstances that an individual might not experience before but are either fantasized via the eyes, stories of and interaction with other people (stimulated) or introduced by history, nation or culture (collective) (Chen et al., 2014; Verma & Rajendran, 2017). In comparison, personal nostalgia, also often named as real nostalgia, refers to individuals' personal experience that can evoke feelings that the individual experienced in the past (Baker & Kennedy, 1994; Chen et al., 2014). This type of nostalgia is closely related with an individual's lived memories of the past (Verma & Rajendran, 2017). This study focuses on examining the role of historical nostalgia on influencing consumers' loyalty intentions in traditional restaurants.

Many studies confirmed that stimulating consumers' nostalgia could induce positive consumer behaviours (Baker & Kennedy, 1994; Hunt & Johns, 2013; Leong et al., 2015; Li et al., 2019; Verma & Rajendran, 2017). An increasing number of companies are using the concept of nostalgia to position product, raise consumers' awareness, and enhance product sales in the marketplace (Holbrook, 1993; Holbrook & Schindler, 1994; Hwang & Hyun, 2013). It is thus significant for companies and organisations to identify and evaluate the triggers of consumers' positive nostalgic feelings, as these are crucial to the attractiveness of brand images. Previous studies revealed that triggers of nostalgia could be categorised into three aspects including social aspects, sensory aspects, and events (Hwang & Hyun, 2013; Holbrook, 1993; Sedikides et al., 2004). Specifically, social aspects involve remembering friends or other attractive and kind people; sensory aspects are perceived via vision, hearing, touch, smell, and taste

such as food, music, interior/exterior design, scents and beverages, and events are listed as anniversaries, gatherings, or other memorable occasions (Hwang & Hyun, 2013; Sedikides et al., 2004; 2008).

It is proposed that pleasurable tastes and smells are likely to induce fond memories (Wildschut et al., 2006; Hwang & Hyun, 2013). Chen and Sun (2008) supported that tourists who held positive attitudes towards the inheritance of local food could affect their overall satisfaction and induce a sense of nostalgia. Walker (2013) noted in their study that tourists were motivated by local and regional cuisines with seasonal delicacies, and experienced a high level of nostalgia. Similarly, Leong, Yeh, Hsiao, and Huan (2015) claimed that that tourists who were attracted by Macau's cuisine and heritage attributes experienced a sense of nostalgia. Lee (2015) reported that culinary attraction was the most significant predictor of nostalgia. Consequently, the first hypothesis is proposed:

H1: The food consumed at the traditional restaurants induces consumers' nostalgia.

In addition to food, physical environment of the restaurant (décor, lighting, interior design, exterior design, background music, ambient conditions, etc) is recognised as another important factor evoking consumers' sense of nostalgia (Hwang & Hyun, 2013; Ha & Jang, 2010; Lee, 2015; Liu & Jang, 2009). According to Jang and Namkung(2009), physical environment of a restaurant could trigger consumers' emotional response. Hwang and Hyun (2013) reported that the unique environment of the luxury restaurant is one of the triggers inducing consumers' nostalgia. Lee (2015) suggested that appropriate decorations, along with nostalgic music and traditional cuisine could stimulate consumers' taste and smell, providing nostalgic and memorable experiences at heritage sites. Moreover, Li et al. (2019) mentioned that hotels should use sensory stimuli including themed interior design, scent and music to enhance pleasant experience and evoke consumers' nostalgia. Yuksel and Yuksel (2002) explained that an attractive physical environment is a significant factor inducing consumers' positive emotional responses. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2: The physical environment of the traditional restaurants induces consumers' nostalgia.

Previous research (Holak & Havlena, 1998; Hwang & Hyun, 2013; Sedikides et al., 2008) found that social aspects (e.g nice, attractive people or friends and families) have significant impacts on inducing consumers' nostalgia. According to Li et al. (2019), retaining service staff could induce the sense of nostalgia from a guest as hotel staff is crucial in offering quality service. Holbrook and Schindler (2003) mentioned that consumers tend to store kind social aspects in personal memory favourably, thus evoking positive nostalgia. Hwang and Hyun (2013) enhanced that kind service staff in a restaurant could make a positive impression on consumers, leading to positive memories of the dining experience, and positive nostalgia. Many studies (Brown and Humphreys, 2002; Hwang & Hyun, 2013; Holak and Havlena, 1998; Li et al., 2019; Sedikides et al., 2008) supported that positive memories tend to trigger positive nostalgia. Therefore, this study hypothesises that:

H3: The staff members and the service provided at the traditional restaurants induce consumers' nostalgia.

2.3 Relationship between nostalgia triggers, perceived value, and loyalty intentions

As a significant antecedent in the research of consumer behaviour, 'perceived value' has been noted more superior compared to perceived quality or satisfaction when predicting loyalty intentions (Cronin et al., 2000; Oh, 2000; Verma & Rajendran, 2017). The most accepted definition of perceived value is by Zeithaml's (1988) study, in which perceived value refers to 'consumers' overall assessment of the utility of a product based of what is received and what is given' (p.14). Past studies have highlighted the role of perceived value in understanding consumers in the service industry (Cronin et al., 2000; Fu et al., 2018; Ha and Jang 2010; Zeithaml 1988).

Loyalty is defined as "a deeply held commitment to buy or patronise a preferred product or service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour" (Oliver, 1999, p.34). Consumer loyalty assists in the long-term viability or sustainability of a company as customer retention enable the company to generate more profits than winning new ones (Chen & Chen, 2010; Verma & Rajendran, 2017). Past studies showed that behavioural intentions are

generally associated with consumer loyalty, predicting consumers' future consumption behaviours (Alexandris et al., 2002; Chen & Chen, 2010; Chen et al., 2012). Therefore, the degree of loyalty for a restaurant can be measured through consumers' behavioural intentions to revisit the restaurant and willingness to be engaged in word-of-mouth behaviours (Han & Ryu, 2006; Oppermann, 2000; Ryu et al., 2008). According to prior studies, a number of researchers (Chen & Chen, 2010; Ha and Jang 2010; Jang et al. 2012; Verma & Rajendran, 2017) have supported positive influences of perceived value on customer satisfaction and loyalty intentions. Therefore, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H4: Consumers' perceived value of the dining experience positively influences their loyalty intentions.

This paper also proposes that nostalgia triggers (food, environment and staff service) in the restaurant setting are related to consumers' perceived value of their dining experience and their loyalty intentions. Specifically, food is widely acknowledged as a key determinant to consumers' loyalty intentions in the restaurant industry (Kim, Youn, and Rao 2017). Han and Ryu (2009) claimed that the attributes to assess food quality include presentation, tastiness, menu item variety, nutrition, freshness, etc. Many studies (Ha and Jang, 2010; Jang et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2017; Ryu et al., 2012) confirmed the direct impacts of consumers' perceived food quality on their perceived value of the dining experience, as well as their loyalty intentions to the restaurant. Accordingly, this study presents the following hypotheses:

H5: The food consumed at the traditional restaurants positively influences consumers' perceived value.
H6: The food consumed at the traditional restaurants positively influences consumers' loyalty intentions.

The physical environment of a restaurant influence consumer emotions and consumer behaviours (Prayag et al., 2015; Reimer & Keuhn, 2005). Good quality of restaurant environment is supposed to foster consumers' higher perceived value and higher intentions to revisit, to recommend, or to talk positively (Han & Hyun, 2017; Jang and Namkung, 2009; Ryu et al., 2012). Physical environment and food quality are perceived as the strongest predictors of consumers' loyalty intentions (Lee & Whaley,

2018). In consistent with previous findings, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H7: The physical environment of the traditional restaurants positively influences consumers' perceived value.

H8: The physical environment of the traditional restaurants positively influences consumers' loyalty intentions.

In addition, according to Nikolich and Sparks (1995), service quality depends on the relationship between customers and service providers and an employee's performance. Service quality is another core determinant of consumers' perceived value (Han & Hyun, 2017; Jang et al. 2012) and loyalty intentions (Lin, Chan and Tsai, 2009; Ha and Jang, 2010) in the restaurant setting. However, it is argued that the impacts of service quality on consumers' perceived value and loyalty intentions rely on the type of restaurant (Muskat et al., 2019). Consequently, in light of the above discussion, this study hypothesises that:

H9: The staff members and the service provided at the traditional restaurants positively influences consumers' perceived value.

H10: The staff members and the service provided at the traditional restaurants positively influences consumers' loyalty intentions.

2.4 Relationship between nostalgia, perceived value, and loyalty intentions

As a nearly universal phenomenon, nostalgia is a sentimental longing for the past (Huang et al., 2016; Sedikides et al., 2004). Based on the prevalence of using nostalgic campaigns as a marketing tool, this study postulates that nostalgia can influence consumers' perceived value of their dining experience, as well as their loyalty intentions. Specifically, existing studies have documented that nostalgia, a bittersweet emotion, can be a powerful stimulus in influencing consumer behaviour (Chen et al., 2014; Leong et al., 2015; Huang et al., 2016; Li et al., 2009). Shields and Johnson (2016) supported that general nostalgic feelings were in direct correlation with consumers' attitudes and loyalty intentions. They pointed out that those impacts of nostalgia on consumers' attitude and behaviours were frequently positive. In addition, with concern to the restaurant setting, Chen et al. (2014) reported that nostalgia has both direct and indirect influences on consumers' consumption intentions in a nostalgic-themed restaurant. The rationale is inferred that nostalgia has

the ability to trigger consumers' feelings of being loved, to enhance consumers' self-esteem and optimism, and to foster consumers' social connectedness (Huang et al., 2016; Sedikides et al., 2008; Chen et al., 2014). Therefore, nostalgia could positively influence evaluations of product quality, brand image, and loyalty intentions towards the product or brand (Merchant & Rose, 2013). The hypotheses are constructed as follows:

H11: Consumers' nostalgia positively influences their perceived value at traditional restaurants.

H12: Consumers' nostalgia positively influences their loyalty intentions at traditional restaurants.

2.5 The moderating effects of gender and age

Gender and age are significant demographic variables influencing various consumer behaviours (Hwang & Choi, 2017; Leonidou et al., 2015). Extant research has investigated the moderating effects of gender and age in different fields. In particular, gender is a social construct associated with virtually all aspects of human behaviour (Kolyesnikova et al., 2009). It has been used as one of the most significant variables in market segmentation (Kim, Lehto, & Morrison, 2007). Many studies have acknowledged that gender is a significant moderating factor in consumers' evaluative judgments (Darley & Smith, 1995; Holbrook, 1986). According to Kim et al. (2007), the gender effects can be explained by the brain lateralization differences between males and females, which are likely to influence consumers' evaluation and judgement.

A number of studies have noted the gender differences in individuals' nostalgic feelings. In particular, according to Holbrook (1993), common sense suggests nostalgia proneness is correlated with gender. Sedikides et al. (2015) reported that women are more nostalgic than men. Lee (2015) corroborated the claim noting males revealed higher nostalgic attachment to the products in their youth than females. More recently, Kim and Yim (2018) reported that gender moderated the effects of nostalgia on consumers' evaluation. Therefore, based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H13: Gender moderates the relationship between consumers' nostalgia and their perceived value at traditional restaurants.

H14: Gender moderates the relationship between consumers' nostalgia and their loyalty intentions at traditional restaurants.

In consumer behaviour literature, age has been claimed as an important factor influencing consumers' loyalty intentions. For example, many researchers (Hsu, 2000; Oh et al., 2002) found that senior consumers tended to be more loyal than the young group. Lambert-pandraud and Laurent (2010) corroborated this claim noting that older and mature consumers have a greater propensity to stay attached to the same preferred products or brand than their younger counterparts.

Extant research revealed that age and nostalgia are positively related (Goulding, 2002; Merchant & Ford, 2008). It is explained that as individuals grow older, they are more likely to obtain more experience, more likely to be more nostalgic (Cho et al.,2019). With particular regard to the context of traditional food consumption, senior adults are more knowledgeable about traditional foods, more concerned about traditions and their transmission (Laureati et al., 2006; Youn et al., 2019). In addition, according to Kim and Yim (2018), age moderated the relationship between consumers' nostalgia and their evaluation. Thus, in light of the above discussion, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H15: Age moderates the relationship between consumers' nostalgia and their perceived value at traditional restaurants.

H16: Age moderates the relationship between consumers' nostalgia and their loyalty intentions at traditional restaurants.

Figure 1 below demonstrates the theoretical model of the hypothesised relationships among nostalgia triggers (restaurant food, environment, staff service), nostalgia, perceived value, and loyalty intentions.

Please Insert Figure 1

3 METHODOLOGY
3.1 Measurements and questionnaire design
Based on the above literature review, a questionnaire was developed to measure the

nostalgia triggers, nostalgia, perceived value, and loyalty intentions. The questionnaire consists of five sections: (1) nostalgic triggers, (2) nostalgia, (3) perceived value, (4) loyalty intentions, and (5) socio-demographic information. In particular, the first section of the questionnaire examines the nostalgia triggers in the setting of traditional restaurants. 12 measurement items concerning restaurant food, physical environment, and staff service were adapted from the work by Hwang and Hyun (2013) and Liu et al (2018). Respondents were asked to evaluate the importance of different restaurant attributes in inducing their nostalgia. The second section of the questionnaire measures nostalgia of the consumers. Eight measurement items were borrowed from past studies (Akgün et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2014; Verma & Rajendran, 2017), and were modified to fit the current study context. Next, regarding the third part of the questionnaire, perceived value was measured with three items employed by by Jang et al. (2012) and Liu et al. (2018). In the fourth part, three items including "intentions to revisit", "positive word of mouth", and "willingness to recommend" were used to assess consumers' loyalty intentions. These items were developed based on the studies by Jang and Namkung (2009) and Jang et al. (2012). All of the above constructs were measured utilizing a 7-point Likert scale with anchors "completely disagree" (1) and "strongly agree" (7). In addition, respondents were also asked to indicate their socio-demographic information including gender, age, and educational level in the final section of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was firstly developed in English, then translated into Chinese following the back-translation process suggested by Mullen (1995) to ensure translation equivalence. A pilot test, using 185 undergraduate students from Yangzhou University was conducted to examine the wording of the questionnaire and the meanings of the scales. A few adjustments were made in wording of some statements based on the feedback from the pilot study, and the questionnaire was finalised for the data collection.

3.2 Data collection

Empirical data were collected in the city of Yanghzou, China between March of 2019 to May of 2019. As a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy, Yangzhou is the home to one of the four major traditional cuisines- Huaiyang cuisine in China. Consequently, as a region well known for its traditional food culture and resources, it is an appropriate research site for this study. With profound traditional food culture and

history, Yangzhou enjoys a number of famous traditional restaurants featuring the local traditional Huaiyang cuisine (Chen et al., 2020). In particular, noted as three "chun", three teahouses (i.e Fuchun Teahouse, Yechun Teahouse, and Gonghechun Teahouse) were the most famous and representative traditional restaurants in Yangzhou with around 100 years history. Therefore, in the current study, questionnaires were formally distributed by a number of trained research assistants at these three representative traditional restaurants in Yangzhou that have the potential to arouse nostalgic feelings.

More specifically, the questionnaires were administered during breakfasts, lunches, and dinners to avoid selection bias. Respondents were approached when they walkout out of the restaurant after finishing their meals through the next-to-pass non-probability sampling technique (Tourism and Recreation Research Unit, 1983). When approaching the potential respondent, a screening question was asked by the research assistant to check if the approached adult has just finished dining at the traditional restaurant. Once the potential respondent met the selection criteria, a brief introduction of the project was provided to check their willingness to participate. A local souvenir/gift was also offered in order to enhance the response rate. A total of 1200 copies of questionnaires were distributed, and 1082 copies were kept for subsequent data analysis after discarding the invalid responses.

3.3 Data analysis

The data was analysed using SPSS 22.0 and Amos 22.0. First, descriptive analysis for respondents' demographic profiles was conducted through SPSS 22.0. Second, Skewness and Kurtosis, two measures of distribution were employed to examine the normality of the data. Third, reliability tests were performed to check the measurement scales of the constructs using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Following reliability analysis, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to ensure the unidimensionality of the scales measuring each construct. Next, common method variance was tested, and structural model analysis was performed to test the proposed hypothesis using the software application of AMOS 22.0.

4 RESULTS
4.1 Profile of sample

The sample consisted of 47.1% male consumers and 52.9% female consumers. The ages of respondents ranged from teenagers to senior citizens. More than half of the respondents (58.8%) were younger than 45 years, and 41.2% of the respondents were over than 45 years. In terms of the education, the sample is characterized as being well educated as around 58.8% of the consumers had at least a graduate degree.

4.2 Data examination

A normal distribution assumption of the data was evaluated using Skewness and Kurtosis. Specifically, Skewness between -2 to +2 and Kurtosis between -3 to +3 suggests a normal data distribution (Hair et al., 2010). The analysis results of this study showed that the Skewness values ranged from -0. 767 to -0. 235 and Kurtosis values ranged from -0. 389 to 0. 776; thus, all variables were normally distributed.

4.3 Measurement scale reliability and validity

Confirmatory factor analysis using AMOS 22.0 was firstly conducted to estimate the reliability and validity of the measurement scales prior to the structural equation modelling. Construct reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR). According to the results shown in Table 1, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the constructs were above the 0.7 threshold ranging from 0.83 to 0.92 (Nunnally, 1978). The composite reliability coefficients were higher than the critical value of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2010). These measures suggest a high level of internal consistency for the measurement model. Next, both convergent and discriminant validity were tested to check the validity of the measurement scales. Specifically, all the six constructs had an average extracted score above the cutoff value of 0.5 (Fornell & Larker, 1981), indicating convergent validity. Discriminant validity was established as the AVE score of each construct exceeded the squared correlations between any of the constructs as shown in Table 2 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As the results indicated adequate convergent and discriminant validity of the six constructs, multicollinearity is not a concern in the data (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Please Insert Table 1
Please Insert Table 2

4.4 Common method variance

In addition, a post hoc Harman's single-factor analysis was conducted to check

whether common method variance is an issue in the data (Podsakof et al., 2003). In particular, an exploratory factor analysis is employed to assess the amount of variance in observed variables that can be explained by one single factor .According to the results, the amount of variance in the data that can be explained by one single factor accounts for 32.69%, which is within the acceptable threshold of 40% (Hair et al., 2010). Therefore, common method variance is not a concern in the data.

4.5 Hypothesis testing

To test the research hypotheses, the structural model was examined. According to the results, the model demonstrated reasonably good fit to the data ($\chi2$=692.357 df=251, p<.000, RFI=9.50, NFI=0.962, TLI=0.968, RMSEA=0.040). Fig. 2 reveals the standardized, theoretical paths, while Table 3 shows the results of hypotheses testing.

According to Table 3, food (β = 0.217, p < 0.01), physical environment (β = 0.250, p < 0.01), and staff service (β = 0.254, p < 0.01) provided at the traditional restaurants had significant positive effects on inducing consumers' nostalgia, supporting H1, H2, H3. In addition, the direct effects of food (β = 0.146, p < 0.01), physical environment (β = 0.108 p < 0.01), and staff service (β = 0.221, p < 0.01) on consumers' perceived value were found to be significantly positive. Thus, hypotheses, H5, H7 and H9, were all supported. Consumers' perceived value was shown in positive and direct correlation with consumers' loyalty intentions at β = 0.978, p < 0.01, supporting H4. However, the results showed that food (β = 0.015, p >0.1), physical environment (β = -0.069, p >0.1), and staff service (β = 0.028, p >0.1) were not in direct relationship with consumers' loyalty intentions. H6, H8, H10 were therefore not supported. Moreover, nostalgia was found to positively influence consumers' perceived value (β = 0.433, p < 0.01), supporting H11. Hypothesis 12 predicts the direct relationship between nostalgia and consumers' loyalty intentions was not supported (β =0.004, p >0.1).

Please Insert Figure 2.
Please Insert Table 3.

In addition, to obtain more insights into the relationships among the latent constructs in the study, mediating process was also examined. Table 4 below that presents the direct, indirect and total effects of relationships among the constructs. Firstly,

nostalgia was not a direct predictor of consumers' loyalty intentions as discussed above. However, nostalgia directly influences consumers' perceived value, and perceived value directly influences loyalty intentions. Therefore, the indirect impacts of nostalgia on consumers' loyalty intentions were noted (0.423), which verifies the mediating role of perceived value playing between nostalgia and loyalty intentions. Second, food, physical environment, and staff service do not directly impact consumers' loyalty intentions. However, the relationships between these three dimensions and perceived value, as well as the relationship between perceived value and loyalty intentions were found to be direct and positive. Therefore, the indirect effects of food (0.235), environment (0.212), and staff service (0.325) on consumers' loyalty intentions were confirmed through perceived value, respectively.

Please Insert Table 4.

Furthermore, the multiple group analyses were conducted to examine the moderating effects of gender and age. Specifically, respondents were firstly divided into two groups by gender: male (n=510) and female (n=572). Then, in terms of age, respondents were categorised into younger consumers (n=636) and senior consumers(n=446) based on the age of 45 years. Next, in order to examine the moderating role of gender and age, chi-square differences between the constrained and unconstrained models were checked with reference to the difference in degrees of freedom (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). According to the results shown in Table 5, gender and age do not have significant impacts on the relationships between nostalgia, perceived value, and loyalty intentions. Thus, hypotheses (H13, H14, H15, H16) were not significant at the 0.05 level.

Please Insert Table 5.

5 DISUCSSIONS

The results presented that food, physical environment and the staff service at the traditional restaurants were all significant factors inducing consumers' nostalgia. This finding is consistent with previous literature (Hwang & Hyun, 2013; Wildschut et al., 2006; Muehling & Sprott, 2004; Sedikides et al., 2008) showing that sensory inputs (e.g. food and environment) and social aspects (e.g. people) are significant triggers

inducing consumers' feelings of fondness for the past.

Given all three factors matter to inducing consumers' nostalgia at traditional restaurants, the relative significance of each individual factor needs to be understood. It is interesting to note that out of the three triggers, staff service contributes the most in inducing consumers' nostalgia followed by physical environment, and food. This finding is supported by previous studies (Hwang & Hyun, 2013; Webster & Sundaram, 2009) that friendly and consumer-oriented staff, staff members' knowledge and experience, and reliable service are of great significance in restaurant management. It seems to accord with past studies (Huang & Hyun, 2013; Sedikides et al., 2008) that social aspect is a common trigger of consumers' nostalgia as nice, attractive or enthusiastic people tend to be remembered in an individual's memory clearly and positively. In addition, this finding might be explained by the informal interview during the data collection that many consumers not only expressed their satisfaction towards the nice service provided by the restaurant staff, but also showed their appreciation towards the traditional clothing dressed by the staff. Some consumers noted that the traditional dress could arouse their nostalgia from the past even thought they did not experience it before. It is supported by Holbrook (1993) that individuals are able to develop nostalgic feelings from the culture that is embedded in daily experience even without direct access to the past.

The findings demonstrated that the consumers' nostalgia can be induced by not only pleasant staff service but also by comfortable physical environment and good food. Past studies (Hwang & Hyun, 2013; Walker, 2008) mentioned that many consumers go to restaurants to satisfy their needs for social stimulation instead of only for food. It highlights the role of physical environment as a salient component of consumers' dining experience (Ryu et al., 2012). Therefore, this study coincides with Yüksel and Yüksel (2002)'s study supporting the positive impacts of an attractive environment on consumers' emotional responses. In addition, high-quality food is a critical factor for Chinese restaurant to differentiate itself from other competitors (Namkung & Jang, 2007; Ryu et al., 2012). According to Huang and Hyun (2013), consumers tend to miss the food-related stimuli provided by a restaurant as time elapses. Lee (2015) corroborated that traditional cuisine, well-designed menu, and good flavours could stimulate consumers' taste and smell, which could create memorable experiences and elicit nostalgia. Consequently, the findings of this study further enhanced the critical

role of staff service, physical environment, and food in inducing consumers' nostalgia at traditional restaurants.

Next, this study revealed that food, physical environment and staff service also significantly influence consumers' perceived value of their dining experience at traditional restaurants. Staff service out of the three elements also exerts the highest effects on consumers' perceived value, followed by food, and physical environment. These findings were in line with previous studies indicating food, physical environment, and staff service of the restaurant are significant antecedents of consumers' perceived value (Ha and Jang 2010; Liu and Tse 2018; Muskat et al. 2019; Ryu, Lee, and Kim 2012). However, although the three factors were significant and direct determinants of consumers' perceived value, they were only indirect predictors of consumers' loyalty intentions. This finding corroborates with previous studies (Liu et al., 2018; Ryu et al.,2012) showing restaurant food, environment, and service only have an indirect effect on consumers' loyalty intentions. Nevertheless, Ha and Jang (2010), Muskat et al.(2019) noted the direct relationship between the three dimensions and loyalty intentions at ethnic restaurants in the US and mountain hut casual ethnic restaurants, respectively. It is explained that the contrasts might be due to the different restaurant contexts and consumer segments (Bujisic, Hutchinson and Parsa, 2014).

The results showed that nostalgia has a significant impact on consumers' perceived value, which were in line with previous studies (Chen et al., 2014; Verma & Rajendran, 2017) acknowledging the role of nostalgia in shaping consumers' consumption experience through positively influencing their perceived values. Therefore, nostalgia nurtures consumers' experiential values at traditional restaurants in the current study. Moreover, the findings of this study indicate that consumers' nostalgia was not directly related to consumers' loyalty intentions at traditional restaurants. Nevertheless, nostalgia was noted as a direct predictor of consumers' loyalty intentions in several studies (Shields & Johnson, 2016; Verma & Rajendran, 2017). This contradiction might be explained by Chen et al., (2014)'s research highlighting both direct and indirect influences of nostalgia on consumers' consumption intentions at a nostalgia-themed restaurant.

Furthermore, in terms of the potential moderators, this study firstly revealed that there were no gender differences in the relationships between nostalgia, perceived value,

and loyalty intentions. In other words, in the current study, males and females enjoyed equal nostalgia proneness and loyalty intentions at traditional restaurants. In addition, this study also did not identify any significant moderating effects of age in the model. According to Cho et al. (2019), senior consumers are more likely to feel nostalgic than their younger counterparts. However, both young and senior consumers exhibited an equal level of possibility to feel nostalgic at traditional restaurants in the current study. This lack of differentiations seems to be in line with the research by Holbrook (1993) that nostalgia shows little or no redundancy with gender or age. Nostalgia might be more closely aligned with experience rather than age (Holbrook,1993).

6 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study has discussed the role of general restaurant attributes (i.e food, environment, and service) in inducing consumers' nostalgia and the way in which nostalgia experienced during the dining influences consumers' loyalty intention at traditional restaurants. It employed a structural model to check the interrelationships among the constructs: general restaurant attributes, nostalgia, consumers'' perceived value, and loyalty intentions, and the testing results reveal a good model fit. The results of this study indicate that nostalgia directly influences consumers' perceived value, and is indirectly related to consumers' loyalty intentions through perceived value as a partial mediator in the context of traditional restaurants. This implies that an increase in consumers' nostalgia leads to a higher level of their perceived value, and loyalty intentions at traditional restaurants.

Therefore, it calls for traditional restaurant management to implement strategies to attract consumers with nostalgic motives, and to arouse the nostalgia of consumers without strong nostalgic motives. Additionally, by assessing the impacts of general restaurant factors in triggering consumers' nostalgia, this study offers insights for restaurant management to understand the relative importance of each component, and how to better trigger consumers' nostalgia.

6.1 Theoretical implications

The results from this study contribute to the existing literature in several ways. First, this study would assist researchers and practitioners in obtaining a better understanding of nostalgia based on empirical data. This study contributes to the hospitality literature by providing a model assessing relationships between general

restaurant attributes (food, environment, and service), nostalgia, perceived value, and loyalty intentions. Extant studies have discussed the loyalty intentions of consumers in the restaurant setting, however, very few studies have analysed the role of nostalgia (Ha & Jang, 2012; Prayag et al., 2015; Ryu et al., 2012). By highlighting the role of nostalgia in affecting consumers' loyalty intentions for a traditional restaurant, this study provides a framework for researchers and restaurant managers to visualize and comprehend the link between nostalgia and loyalty intentions.

Second, our findings give credence to the existing theoretical background that social aspects (e.g people) and sensory inputs (e.g. food and environment) were major triggers inducing consumers' nostalgia (Hwang & Hyun, 2013; Sedikides et al., 2004). Food, environment, and service provided by staff were confirmed as significant components triggering consumers' nostalgia at traditional restaurants. This finding implies that traditional restaurants can arouse consumers' nostalgia through enhancing restaurant attributes. In addition, this study also supports previous studies that food, environment, and service could directly predict consumers' perceived value, while were not in direct correlation with loyalty intentions (Liu et al., 2018; Muskat et al., 2019; Prayag et al., 2015).

Third, our findings reveal the mediating effects of perceived value. The impacts of restaurant attributes (food, environment, and service) on consumers' loyalty intentions, and the impacts of nostalgia on consumers' loyalty intentions are both mediated via perceived value. This corroborates the idea that consumers highly rely on perceived value to decide their loyalty intentions.

Last but not the least, another significant contribution of this study is that it tested the moderating effects of gender and age. Although gender and age were not significant moderators, this research extends the current knowledge of the effects of demographic factors on the relationships between nostalgia, perceived value, and loyalty intentions in the context of traditional restaurant dining. From the practical perspective, traditional restaurants are suggested to undertake the marketing strategies aiming at a broad range of consumers regardless of their gender and age.

6.2 Practical implications
The findings of this study suggest more specific managerial implications for

marketing traditional restaurants and other nostalgic-themed restaurants. As highlighted by the results, consumers' nostalgia has a positive influence on their perceived value of the dining experience at traditional restaurants, which in turn lead to higher loyalty intentions. Therefore, promoting individuals' nostalgia could be an effective way of turning them into loyalty consumers and enhancing their tie with the traditional restaurants. Given the general factors of traditional restaurants (food, environment, and staff service) have significant impacts on inducing consumers' nostalgia, the following strategies are indicated to achieve the goal.

First of all, traditional restaurants need to manage restaurant employees who provide direct service to the consumers. In particular, a friendly attitude, professional knowledge, and good skills are the most frequently appreciated qualities of restaurant employees (Brochado et al., 2019). Kind and helpful restaurant staff significantly influence whether the dining consumers elicit nostalgia, as well as perceive higher value of their dining experience at traditional restaurants. Therefore, managers should pay more attention to staff training and selection to deliver consistent and high quality of service (Brochado et al., 2019; Muskat et al., 2019). Employees need to be trained with respect to both service interactions and emotional displays when dealing with consumers (Muskat et al., 2019). In addition, traditional restaurants could also try to equip restaurant employees with uniform traditional clothing. Local traditional dress as a form of cultural marker could offer consumers with more authentic experience (Mkono,2012). Furthermore, given the staff service provided by the traditional restaurants as the greatest contributor in inducing consumers' nostalgia managers should adopt monetary and non-monetary incentives to minimize the turnover rate of knowledgeable and experienced staff associated with an improved ability in serving consumers (Hwang & Hyun, 2013). These experienced staff can leave lasting and pleasant impressions in consumers' minds, inducing more positive emotions from consumers.

Second, traditional restaurants should pay attention to the quality control of the environment attributes based on the significance of restaurant environment shown in inducing consumers' nostalgia. It is critical for traditional restaurants to offer comfortable dining atmosphere and authentic dining experience. According to recent literature (Mkono, 2011, 2012; Ritzer, 1999), the significance of 'traditional cultural eatertainment' is highlighted for traditional and ethnic restaurants to offer authentic

dining experience. 'Traditional cultural eatertainment' refer to varied forms of cultural markers such as traditional/ethnic architecture and decorations, traditional music and dance, and traditional story-telling. Therefore, in addition to ensuring the cleanliness of the dining environment at the forefront (Kivela et al., 2000), the interior/exterior design, decorations or furnishings of the restaurant need to be regularly maintained and well upgraded (Lee, 2015; Hwang & Hyun, 2013). Managers need to ensure the designs and decorations reflect the traditional culture and history of the cuisine and the restaurant. Moreover, sensory stimuli such as traditional or nostalgic music and scent could be used to offer a more comfortable ambience and atmosphere (Lee, 2015; Li et al., 2009).

Third, traditional restaurants should also pay sufficient attention to improving the quality of food attributes covering food taste, presentation, freshness and texture, and menu choices. Specifically, traditional restaurants should try to maintain and deliver consistent and high quality of food. Traditional restaurants are restaurants offering traditional local food with a relatively long history, and distinguished local culinary characteristics (Youn et al., 2019). Ensuring the good quality of food throughout the time is important in retaining loyalty consumers. Additionally, restaurant managers should spend more time working on the presentation and physical appearance of the food (Hwang & Hyun, 2013; Muskat et al.,2019). For instance, the traditional food could be presented or decorated with some traditional and cultural elements (e.g plates, patterns) as recorded in the history book. Hiring a professional food stylist can be considered to cooperate with the chefs (Hwang & Hyun, 2013). Traditional restaurants are also encouraged to develop a memorable menu containing the favourite traditional food dishes, as well as a seasonal menu available during a limited time period to aid in triggering consumers'' nostalgia (Hyun & Kim, 2011).

7 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite the useful implications, this study also faces the following limitations. First, this study only focuses on assessing the impacts of restaurant-related factors on inducing consumers' nostalgia, while intentionally omitting potential factors in relation to the consumers, e.g individual's memorable events such as anniversaries, gatherings. Future research could include other relevant factors to generate a more systematic analysis of the triggers inducing consumers' nostalgia. Second, his study

examined the interrelationships among nostalgia triggers, nostalgia, perceived value, and restaurant loyalty using a sole quantitative method. However, researchers in the future could utilize a mixture of research methods to provide more insights into how, when, and why the relationships or causality between nostalgia and loyalty intentions does exist and to what extent. Third, the survey was conducted at three traditional restaurants; however, whether the findings differ across the three restaurants remain unexplored. Future studies could further investigate into the analysis results of the model across three difference restaurants, and examine the influencing factors. Last, this study was conducted in only one destination, Yangzhou, China. Therefore, the extent to which the interpretation and implementation of the results is somewhat restricted. The proposed model needs to be further validated using different populations in different destinations.

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Table 1. Confirmatory factor analysis for measurement model

Construct and scale items	Loading	Alpha	CR	AVE
Food				
The taste of the food	0.79	0.86	0.86	0.60
The presentation of the food	0.77			
The freshness and texture of the food	0.79			
The menu and choices of the food	0.76			
Environment				
The clean environment of the restaurant	0.83	0.91	0.85	0.59
The interior/exterior design and decorations of the restaurant	0.78			
The background music, smell of the restaurant	0.68			
The atmosphere of the restaurant	0.78			
Staff service				
The way the wait staff served me	0.76	0.86	0.88	0.64
The willingness of the staff to help me with	0.84			
The kindness of the wait staff in the restaurant	0.85			
The attention received from the staff	0.76			
Nostalgia				
When I dine at this traditional branded restaurant, I could feel the serenity of simple life.	0.72	0.92	0.90	0.52
I could search for some feelings within me when dining at this traditional branded restaurant.	0.74			
When I dine at this traditional branded restaurant, I could feel revisiting my childhood.	0.73			
Dining at this traditional branded restaurant enable me to remember how things use to be.	0.81			
When I dine at this traditional branded restaurant, I could feel the memories in the life of past era.	0.80			
Dining at this traditional branded restaurant makes me feel the past is better.	0.80			
When I dine at this traditional branded restaurant, I could feel the changing of time	0.78			
When I dine at this traditional branded restaurant, I feel remembering something from the past.	0.75			
Perceived value				
The food price was appropriate.	0.71	0.83	0.83	0.62
The service was good for the price	0.83			
Overall, the dining experience was good for the price.	0.80			
Loyalty Intention				
I would like to come back to this restaurant again	0.86	0.84	0.84	0.63
I would like to say positive things about this	0.83			

restaurant to others		
I would like to recommend this restaurant to others	0.70	

Table 2. Discriminant validity

	FQ	EQ	SQ	NOS	PV	BI
FQ	0.60					
EQ	0.24	0.59				
SQ	0.32	0.24	0.64			
NOS	0.24	0.17	0.26	0.59		
PV	0.21	0.18	0.24	0.33	0.62	
BI	0.18	0.12	0.20	0.26	0.40	0.63

Table 3. Results of structural model and hypotheses testing

Hypothesized Relationships	Coefficient	Results
H1: Food consumed at restaurant→ nostalgia	.217***	Accepted
H2: Physical environment of restaurant→ nostalgia	.250***	Accepted
H3: Staff service provided at restaurant→ nostalgia	.254***	Accepted
H4: Perceived value→ behavioural intentions	.978***	Accepted
H5: Food consumed at restaurant→ perceived value	.146***	Accepted
H6: Food consumed at restaurant →behavioural intentions	.015	Rejected
H7: Physical environment of restaurant→ perceived value	.108***	Accepted
H8: Physical environment of restaurant→ behavioural intentions	-.069	Rejected
H9: Staff service provided at restaurant→ perceived value	.221***	Accepted
H10: Staff service provided at restaurant→ behavioural intentions	.028	Rejected
H11: Nostalgia→ perceived value	.433***	Accepted
H12: Nostalgia→ behavioural intentions	.004	Rejected

Table 4. Direct, indirect and total effects of relationships

Path	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect
H1: Food consumed at restaurant→ nostalgia	.217		.217
H2: Physical environment of restaurant→ nostalgia	.250		.250
H3: Staff service provided at restaurant→ nostalgia	.254		.254
H4: Perceived value→ behavioural intentions	.978		.978
H5: Food consumed at restaurant→ perceived value	.146	.094	.240
H6: Food consumed at restaurant →behavioural intentions		.235	.235
H7: Physical environment of restaurant→ perceived value	.108	.108	.216
H8: Physical environment of restaurant→ behavioural intentions		.212	.212
H9: Staff service provided at restaurant→ perceived value	.221	.110	.331
H10: Staff service provided at restaurant→ behavioural intentions		.325	.325
H11: Nostalgia→ perceived value	.433		.433
H12: Nostalgia→ behavioural intentions		.423	.423

Table 5. Results of multiple group analyses

| Demography	Constrained model (chi sq)	Df (constrained)	Unconstrained model (chi sq)	Df (unconstrained)	p-value for nested comparison	Results
Gender	2342.474	547	2309.097	518	0.26	No difference
Age	2312.303	547	2279.15	518	0.27	No difference
H13: Gender moderates the relationship between consumers' nostalgia and their perceived value at traditional restaurants.						Not supported
H14: Gender moderates the relationship between consumers' nostalgia and their loyalty intentions at traditional restaurants.						Not supported
H15: Age moderates the relationship between consumers' nostalgia and their perceived value at traditional restaurants.						Not supported
H16: Age moderates the relationship between consumers' nostalgia and their loyalty intentions at traditional restaurants.						Not supported

Figure 1. Theoretical Model
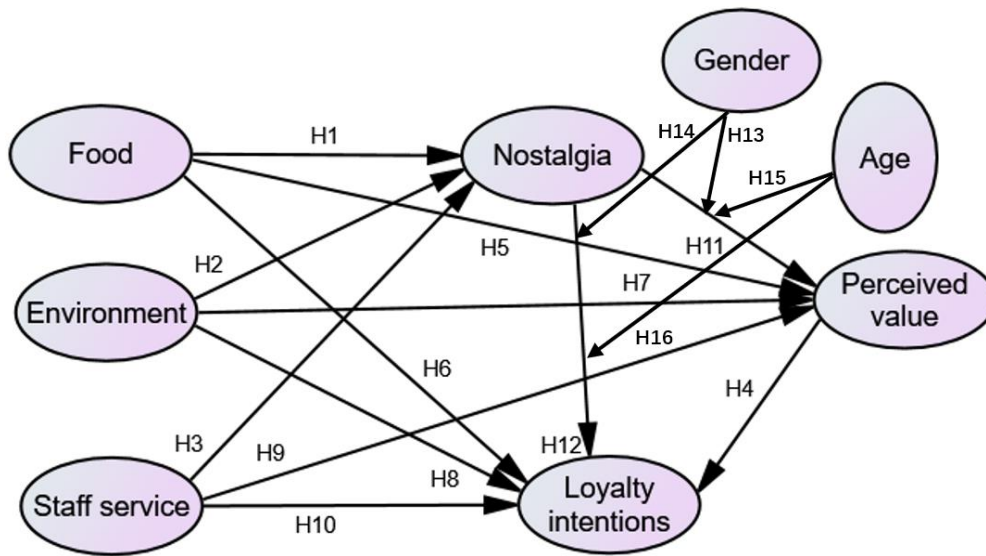
Figure 2. Results of the Structural Model
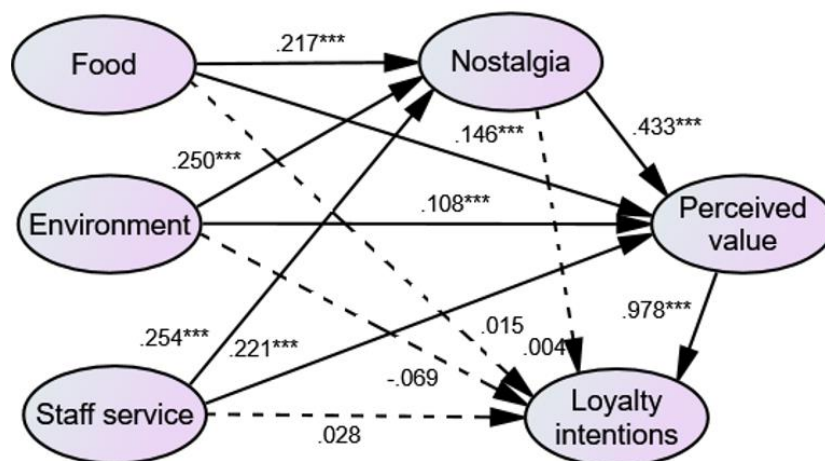
Note:→Indicates significant path. →Indicates non-significant path.
*Significant at p < 0.10. **Significant at p < 0.05. *** Significant at p < 0.01.