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More Than Just a Meal: The Hidden Forces Behind Ethnic Restaurant Revisits

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Abstract

The research is aimed to investigate how ethnic food authenticity, ambiance, service encounters, and customer interaction influenced both cognitive and affective dining experiences. This included how experiences subsequently affected revisit intention in the context of ethnic restaurant. This research conducted a quantitative, cross-sectional survey using data collected from 428 respondents who dined at Sundanese, Balinese, and Padang ethnic restaurant. The result showed that several restaurant attributes significantly contributed to influencing dining experience, with service quality and food authenticity regarded as the most influential factors. Affective dining experience played a more dominant role than cognitive evaluation in directly and indirectly influencing customers' intention to revisit. These insights supported previous theoretical frameworks, outlined the importance of emotional engagement and perceptual value in predicting customer loyalty in ethnic dining settings. The present research contributed to the growing body of hospitality literature by offering a nuanced understanding of how various experiential elements drove revisit intention in ethnic restaurant. It also explored the strategic role of affective and cognitive experiences in fostering customer retention, providing practical guidance for restaurant managers seeking to balance cultural authenticity with memorable service delivery.

Keywords: Ethnic restaurant, affective dining experience, cognitive dining experience, revisit intention

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Introduction

Ethnic restaurant is an aspect of the hospitality sector in several Asian developing countries, responsible for preserving and connecting cultural heritage with current and future customer demands. The diverse cultural food heritage must be preserved and promoted to support the development of the tourism industry. This has an impact on the economic growth of local communities, including environmental preservation, with the sustainability of traditional local ingredients through ethnic culinary innovations. As a result, restaurants serve authentic dishes, promoting ethnic interior designs reflecting specific cultural attributes. It also faces competition, resulting in the need for effective marketing strategies based on consumer perspectives (Aybek & Özdemir, 2022; Mawroh & Dixit, 2022; Premordia & Gál, 2023; Sattarzadeh et al., 2023). In this context, an ethnic restaurant offered a unique cultural and culinary experience, creating market differentiation. The authenticity increased perceived value, attracting customers seeking memorable dining experiences in this global era. Focusing on customer experience enhances respective appeal, reputation, and business sustainability. In marketing-related research, particularly in the service industry, customer experience played a crucial role in active customer engagement and interactions at touchpoints, which was considered memorable and measurable (Tueanrat et al., 2021; Fan & Mattila, 2020; Rašan et al., 2022). This concept was effectively used to predict behavioral intention, benefiting service providers. Meanwhile, several studies focused on restaurant experiences (Bogueva et al., 2022; Hwang et al., 2022; Kim & Jang, 2018; Kim & Lee, 2022; Seyitoğlu & Ivanov, 2020), specifically on the limitations of ethnic food experiences. Existing research on ethnic restaurants often examined food quality, service, and dining experience. Based on the description, it was reported that service quality significantly influenced the overall experience (Escobar Rivera, 2019; Nyam-ochir, 2020; Varma et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2023). Many studies have explored customer experience amidst restaurant competition, but few address both perspectives, including its antecedents. The majority adopted a unidimensional method despite the cognitive and affective nature of experience (Riaz et al., 2022; Alnawas & Hemsley-Brown, 2018; Molinillo et al., 2020; Palací et al., 2019). This research aimed to predict consumer behavioral intention, particularly revisit intention, which was used to measure the success of the restaurant. Revisit intention relied on customer satisfaction, expressed through positive word of mouth. The research also focused on ethnic restaurant in Indonesia and the behavior of cross-cultural urban consumers, a topic that had not been deeply explored. This led to the formulation of the following two research questions Do cognitive and affective experiences influence revisit intention in ethnic-themed restaurant? and What factors trigger these experiences? To answer these, structural modelling examined how ethnic food authenticity, ambience, and service encounters affected dining experience. Furthermore, a new variable, customer interaction, aimed at recognizing the growing importance of social interaction during restaurant visits was included.

Theoretical background and hypotheses development

Theoretical background

The proposed framework was based on experiential theory (Schmitt, 1999) and service quality concept applicable to restaurant (Su et al., 2022). The framework connected customer experience to overall quality management, impacting consumer behavior

through expected and perceived service quality. According to Sweeney et al. (2016), intangible and simultaneously produced and consumed services, affect consumer perceptions during interactions. Quality was further divided into technical, evaluated post-interaction, and functional, in respect to service performance (Grönroos, 1984). Perceived service quality arose from consumers' assessments of these dimensions, resulting in the comparison of services received with expectations (Medberg & Grönroos, 2020). The service quality model comprised customer-employee interactions, the environment, and offerings (Talukder et al., 2023). Additionally, it incorporated a three-factor model consisting of interaction, physical environment, and outcome qualities (Tuncer et al., 2020). The model outlined the gaps between service levels provided and expected care. The identification of gaps between customer expectations and perceptions enhanced satisfaction and service quality (Aktaş Polat, 2022). Regarding this perception, the inclusion of cognitive aspects in experiences, comprising both cognitive and affective elements (Huang & Chen, 2021; Chen & Girish, 2023), was essential. An analysis of brand experience focused on affection, connection, and passion across various disciplines. Experiences included intellectual and sensory aspects, forming cognitive and affective elements (Alnawas & Hemsley-Brown, 2018). Cognitive evaluation assessed service components, while emotional analysis explored subjective feelings during interactions. Furthermore, the division of experience into cognitive and affective elements (Molinillo et al., 2020; Palací et al., 2019), was in line with previous research on the multidimensional nature of satisfaction. Affective and cognitive experiences were influenced by sensory inputs, emotions, creativity, rationality, and social engagements (Chen & Girish, 2023). It also comprised aesthetic features, instructional, entertaining, and escapist elements relevant to marketing and food service (Riaz et al., 2022). Dining experience is crucial for travelers, influencing the personal perception of a destination, alongside revisit intention (Zhu et al., 2024). The perceptions of local food was influenced by its functional, social, emotional, cultural, and health values. The travelers' perception of restaurant menus, tech-based services, and experiential innovations impacted cognitive food image of the destination, thereby strengthening intention to return including improving the brand image (Ding et al., 2022). A positive family restaurant image significantly improved customer satisfaction, trust, and revisit intention (Jeon, 2017). Prior research reported that customers were inclined to revisit and recommend restaurant (Chun & Nyam-Ochir, 2020).

Hypotheses development

Detailed traditional cooking processes showed food authenticity, the origin of raw materials, and quality certificates (Chousou & Mattas, 2019). However, preliminary research reported that tangible cues significantly impacted customer perceptions of authenticity and behavior, including the multidimensionality, language, and service provider appearance (Baker & Kim, 2016). Prior research reported that restaurant authenticity positively influenced perceived value, with market responses often using this variable to judge quality (Liu et al., 2018). For example, authentic food represented cultural honesty and sincerity (Zhang et al., 2019). An effective communicating atmosphere, décor, layout, and other related environmental elements enhanced customer emotions and experiences, thereby driving increased consumption (Meng & Choi, 2018). The impact of the service environment on behavior is a crucial topic in hospitality, with recent research reporting that social phenomenon, such as physical factors (décor, layout, lighting), significantly affected consumer behaviour (Hanks & Line, 2018). Servicescape, including environmental conditions, spatial layout, and décor style (Bitner, 1992), influenced customer expectations of service quality and strongly correlated with affective experience (El-Said et al., 2021). A service encounter referred to the direct interaction between the provider and customer during the service delivery process, essential for evaluating customer satisfaction, as well as ensuring long-term business sustainability (Zhang et al., 2020). Despite the global importance of ethnic restaurants, the service encounter experience remained an evolving concept in marketing. This led to the need for restaurants to identify the determinants of customer service encounters, including analysing its impact on business performance (Mukucha et al., 2019). During a service encounter, customers are physically present, interacting with one another, restaurant environment, and employees (Okwachi, 2019). Social interaction in restaurants required customers to engage with loved ones, namely family, friends, and relatives. Hospitality and tourism experiences were distinct due to their uniqueness and irreplaceability (Cao et al., 2019). Additionally, social service revolved around human interactions in the service environment, as well as interactions with waiters and fellow customers (Hanks & Line, 2018). In the hospitality and tourism industries, customer-to-customer interactions often surpassed those with service providers, resulting in a significant part of experience (Baker & Kim, 2016). Based on the discussion, consumer experience consisted of cognitive, sensory, social, and behavioural responses towards the purchase or consumption journey (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Quality measurement through experience impacted behavioural intention, signifying a shift towards service-based marketing (Kuppelwieser & Klaus, 2021). Dining experience was assessed using service quality components such as food quality, service encounter, ambience, and atmosphere, with some research focusing on the following antecedents price, technology, and social environment (Chun & Nyam-Ochir, 2020; Varma et al., 2021). Preliminary research also explored food authenticity and service quality as predictors of dining experience. However, social relationship factors, namely interactions between guests and waiters, remained underexplored (Ab Latif, 2018; Escobar Rivera et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2023).

The linkage between ethnic food authenticity with cognitive and affective dining experience

Gastronomy played a crucial role in travel experiences, gaining increased popularity across various destinations. Prior research reported that food authenticity and cultural distinctiveness improved perceived experiences. Meanwhile, product adaptation reduced perceptions of authenticity and cultural distinctiveness (Antón et al., 2019). In experience economy, intangible cultural heritage significantly enhanced tourist experiences, with authenticity impacting its quality and satisfaction (Lu et al., 2022; Li

et al., 2016). Constructive and existential authenticity also exerted distinct influences on the quality of experience and customer satisfaction (Lu et al., 2022), forming the basis for the first hypotheses.

H1: Ethnic Food Authenticity had a positive connection with cognitive dining experience.
H2: Ethnic Food Authenticity had a positive connection with affective dining experience.

The linkage between ethnic ambiance with cognitive and affective dining experience

Servicescape, emotion, and trust greatly impacted service experience, with trust exerting the most significant influence on the customer health experience, followed by emotional factors and the servicescape (Choi et al., 2016). In this context, servicescape directly improved emotional experience and space flow (Jeon et al., 2021), while ambient, layout, signage, including equipment functionality, influenced service experience and loyalty (Lee et al., 2019). A total of eight antecedent variables, including the laboratory environment, were identified as influential determinants of patient experience. The phlebotomy process was recognised as the most critical contributor, followed sequentially by the attitudes exhibited by healthcare staff and patients regarding the perceptions of technological integration (Widyowati et al., 2023). Online store colors, particularly blue, contributed more to the shopping experience than yellow (Ettis, 2017). Based on these results, the following hypotheses were formulated

H3: Ethnic Ambience had a positive connection with cognitive dining experience.
H4: Ethnic Ambience had a positive connection with affective dining experience.

The linkage between service encounter with cognitive and affective dining experience

Customer interactions at various touchpoints influenced the perception of a company's quality, enhancing the satisfaction and willingness to continue business (Voorhees et al., 2017). In restaurants, environmental factors and interactions with staff and other customers significantly impacted consumer experience value (Hsu, 2018; Wu et al., 2021, 2022). Based on these insights, additional hypotheses were formulated

H5: Service encounter had a positive connection with cognitive dining experience.
H6: Service encounter had a positive connection with affective dining experience.

The linkage between customer interaction with cognitive and affective dining experience

Social interaction in respect to service encounters refers to the exchange between customers, influencing personal experiences (Han et al., 2022; Agarwal & Mohan, 2022). Its frequency exceeded customer-service provider interactions, particularly in the hospitality and tourism sectors (Baker & Kim, 2016). Additionally, the servicescape significantly impacted these interactions, influencing experience quality, satisfaction, and loyalty (Rashid-Radha et al., 2016; Tran et al., 2020). Quality customer-to-customer interactions were crucial for excellent customer experiences (Kim & Choi, 2016). These interactions which were reviewed in respect to employee-customer relationships impacted customer experience and value creation (Lin et al., 2020). Drawing from these insights, the following hypotheses were formulated

H7: Customer Interaction had a positive connection with cognitive dining experience.
H8: Customer Interaction had a positive connection with affective dining experience.

The linkage between cognitive and affective dining experience with revisit intention

Customer experience is a critical moment when customers evaluate respective interaction, impacting long-term decisions (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Furthermore, revisit intention reflected the probability of customers returning to an establishment. Experiential marketing relied on emotions and rationality (Schmitt, 1999), allowing companies to create experiences that suit emotional attachment. Considering this description, factors such as ethnic food authenticity, ambience, service encounters, and customer interaction influenced cognitive and affective experiences, impacting subjective perceptions (Li, 2018). Positive experiences also increased revisit intention (Lee et al., 2019), resulting in the formulation of these hypotheses.

H9: Cognitive experience had a positive connection with revisit intention.
H10: Affective experience had a positive connection with revisit intention.

The linkage between ethnic food authenticity, ambience, service encounter and customer interaction with revisit intention

Extensive empirical research reported the critical role of experiential factors in influencing revisit intention within ethnic dining contexts. Additionally, recent research stated that ethnic food authenticity significantly enhanced revisit intention by fostering cultural attachment and satisfaction (Liu et al., 2021), with authentic culinary experiences serving as the main driver of customer loyalty. Ethnic ambience had been proven to evoke nostalgic emotions, reinforcing cultural identity, and the creation of memorable experiences that prompted repeated visits (Zhang et al., 2023; Sthapit et al., 2023). The impact of service encounter quality was equally essential, as culturally sensitive interactions with staff greatly increased revisit intention through relationship building and trust development (Chen & Lee, 2021). Furthermore, customer interaction - both with staff and fellow

diners - increased revisit intention by facilitating shared cultural experiences and social bonding (Lee et al., 2023; Wu & Chen, 2022). Drawing from these insights, the following hypotheses were formulated.

H11: Ethnic Food authenticity had a positive connection with revisit intention.
H12: Ethnic Ambience had a positive connection with revisit intention.
H13: Service encounter had a positive connection with revisit intention.
H14: Customer Interaction had a positive connection with revisit intention.

The linkage between ethnic food authenticity, ambience, service encounter, customer interaction with affective dining experience and revisit intention

Recent research on hospitality focused on the mediating role of affective dining experience, emotional responses and sensory enjoyment in associating ethnic restaurant attributes to revisit intention. Food authenticity and ambience triggered nostalgia and pleasure, enhancing revisit intention (Kim et al., 2023). Similarly, authentic service interactions fostered emotional bonds, with affective experience mediating 38% of loyalty outcomes (Chen and Lee, 2022). Culturally rooted interactions triggered emotional engagement sufficiently to influence behaviour (Walls, 2020), with innovative food presentation inspiring memorable experiences that drive revisit intention (Yen et al., 2024). Based on these insights, additional hypotheses were formulated

H15: Affective dining experience mediated the positive effect of ethnic food authenticity on revisit intention.
H16: Affective dining experience mediated the positive effect of ethnic ambiance on revisit intention.
H17: Affective dining experience mediated the positive effect of service encounter on revisit intention.
H18: Affective dining experience mediated the positive effect of customer interaction on revisit intention.

The linkage between ethnic food authenticity, ambience, service encounter, customer interaction with cognitive dining experience and revisit intention

Recent research stated that cognitive dining experience centered on perceived value and evaluative judgments as the main mediator connecting restaurant attributes to revisit intention. Ethnic ambience and food authenticity drove cognitive appraisals, explaining 42% of revisit intention variance (Zhang et al.,2023). This further showed that cognitive evaluation dominates when functional values such as price fairness were salient (Park & Jang, 2024). Additionally, perceptions of food quality and service significantly influenced satisfaction and loyalty in ethnic dining (Liu et al.,2024). These results verified the critical role of cognitive processing in terms of driving consumer behaviour in ethnic restaurant. Based on these insights, the following hypotheses were formulated

H19: Cognitive dining experience mediated the positive effect of ethnic food authenticity on revisit intention.
H20: Cognitive dining experience mediated the positive effect of ethnic ambience on revisit intention.
H21: Cognitive dining experience mediated the positive effect of service encounter on revisit intention.
H22: Cognitive dining experience mediated the positive effect of customer interaction on revisit intention.

The theoretical framework is a representation to address the formulated hypotheses.

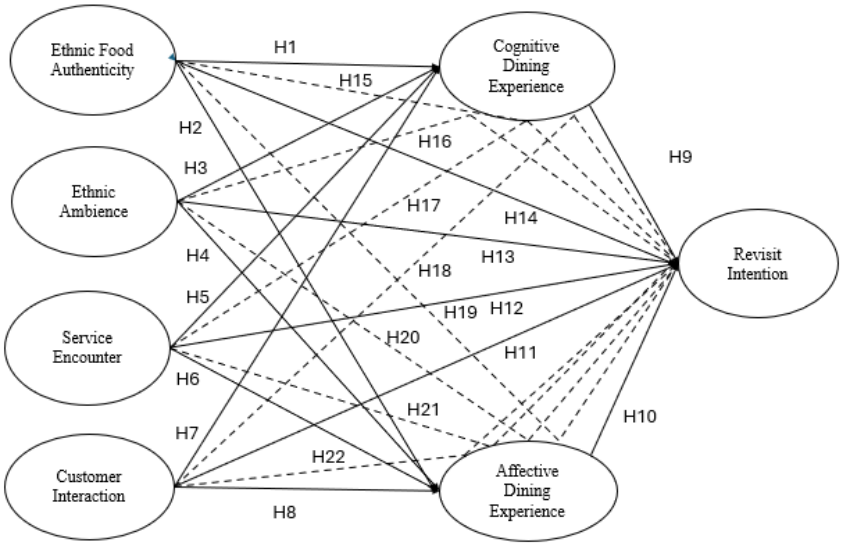

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Research method

The present research adopted a quantitative method with a cross-sectional design. The scope of investigation included all variables described in the proposed model. The dependent variables consisted of ethnic food authenticity, ambience, service encounter, and customer interaction, mediated by cognitive and affective dining experiences, alongside revisit intention as the dependent variable. The conceptual framework was tested using samples obtained from 428 customers who visited an Indonesian ethnic restaurant in January 2024, selected through purposive sampling. G*Power was used to determine the minimum sample size of 172, which met the requirements for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) analysis (Kock & Hadaya, 2018; Memon et al., 2020). Regarding the description, the respondents participated anonymously and voluntarily, with confidentiality assured. The constructs outlined in the proposed conceptual framework were assessed through a structured questionnaire, comprising indicators adapted from validated and contextually relevant scholarly sources. The questionnaire was translated into local languages for clarity and reviewed by healthcare marketing experts. A six-point Likert scale was selected based on previous research showing its suitability for Asian respondents (Chomeya, 2010). The level of agreement was assessed by the respondents using a six-point scale adapted from prior research (Cao, 2016; Chen et al., 2020; Lee & Park, 2019; Lin et al., 2020; Meng & Choi, 2018; Yoo et al., 2020) and modified to suit novelty concepts. The PLS-SEM method was selected due to the robustness in handling complex structural models, making it particularly suitable for explanatory designs, including the current conceptual framework consisting of fifteen constructs (Hair et al., 2019; Shmueli et al., 2019). SmartPLS ™ version 4.0, characterised by the bootstrapping menu, was used for the analysis (Memon et al., 2021). Furthermore, PLS-SEM consisted of two primary models, namely measurement and structural. Regarding the description, the measurement model focused on evaluating reliability and validity. The structural model was used to analyse the relationships between constructs. The validity and reliability were checked through the following indicators, construct reliability, including construct and discriminant validity, followed by significance analysis in the structural model.

Result and discussion

Respondent profile

A total of 428 respondents, who met the stipulated criteria, participated in the research, with both behavioural and demographic profiles as shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Respondent demographic profiles

Profile	Description	Total	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	231	54
	Female	197	46
Total		428	100
Age (Years)	25 – 30	240	56
	31 – 35	81	19
	36 – 40	60	14
	>40	47	11
Total		428	100
Occupation	Entrepreneur	128	30
	Private sectors	175	41
	Government employees	13	3
	Housewife	73	17
	Freelancer	30	7
	Others	9	2
Total		428	100
Educational background	High School/Equivalent	77	18
	Bachelor/Graduates	218	51
	Postgraduate	133	31
Total		428	100
Frequency of visiting restaurant in a month.	0-1	231	54
	2-3	154	36
	>3	43	10
Total		428	100
Restaurant preferences	Padangnese Restaurant	171	40
	Sundanese Restaurant	137	32
	Balinese Restaurant	120	28
Total		428	100
Ethnicity	Javanese	171	40
	Chinese	94	22
	Sundanese	34	8
	Balinese	26	6
	Malay (include Padangnese)	39	9
	Eastern Indonesian people	56	13
	Others	8	2
Total		428	100

Majority of the respondents were men (54%), mainly aged between 25 to 30 years (56%), followed by 31 to 35 years (19%), 36 to 40 years (14%), and over 40 years (11%). Furthermore, approximately 41% worked in the private sector, and 51% held bachelor's degrees, with the remainder possessing postgraduate or high school qualifications (31% and 18%, respectively). Ethnicity-wise, 40% were Javanese, 22% Chinese, 13% Eastern Indonesian, 9% Malay, 8% Sundanese, 6% Balinese, and 2% belonged to other tribes. In terms of restaurant visits, 54% visited 0 to 1 time a month, 36% visited 2 to 3 times a month, and 10% visited more than 3 times a month, as shown in Table 1. This research examined the outer model, where indicators falling below the prescribed threshold of 0.708 were excluded based on the results realized. Subsequently, all retained indicators were deemed reliable for measuring each construct assuming the cumulative value exceeded 0.708.

Table 2: Construct reliability and validity

Variable	Code	Indicator	Outer loadings	CA	CR	AVE
Affective Ethnic Dining Experience	AEDE1	This restaurant triggered positive feelings about regional cultural diversity.	0.889	0.902	0.931	0.773
	AEDE2	The service provided in this restaurant makes one proud of the rich cultural region.	0.880			
	AEDE3	There were fond memories of visit to this restaurant.	0.849			
	AEDE4	The service provided when eating at this restaurant gave a positive impression.	0.897			
Cognitive Ethnic Dining Experience	CEDE1	The food and beverage service at this restaurant was unique in respect to the cultural origin of the food.	0.879	0.859	0.914	0.78
	CEDE2	Eating at this restaurant triggered ones' curiosity about the food served.	0.870			
	CEDE3	This restaurant served food cooked traditionally.	0.902			
Customer Interaction	CIT1	Customers had a great time interacting with peers while at this restaurant.	0.917	0.936	0.954	0.84
	CIT2	The customers had a pleasant interaction with respective family while at this restaurant.	0.926			
	CIT3	The pleasure of interacting with partners while at this restaurant was felt.	0.903			
	CIT4	The customers felt relaxed when interacting with old friends at restaurant.	0.919			
Ethnic Ambience	ETA1	Based on personal opinion, the interior design of this restaurant reflected the cultural origination of the food.	0.907	0.936	0.954	0.84
	ETA2	The theme of restaurant's decor was in line with the culture the food.	0.921			
	ETA3	Based on personal opinion, the atmosphere of restaurant was in keeping with the cultural origin of the food.	0.911			
	ETA4	The traditional music at this restaurant conformed with the cultural origin of the food.	0.769			
Ethnic Food Authenticity	EFA1	Personally, the appearance of the food at this restaurant reflected the cultural origin of the people.	0.795	0.862	0.901	0.646
	EFA2	In line with personal opinion, the food at this restaurant was cooked with regional specialties.	0.847			
	EFA3	Personally, this restaurant served food with chili sauce typical of the region where the food originated.	0.827			
	EFA4	Based on personal opinion, this restaurant traditionally served food using banana leaves.	0.708			
	EFA5	In accordance with personal opinion, restaurant served food as it is done in the region of origin.	0.833			
Revisit Intention	RIT1	The customers intended to visit restaurant again.	0.918	0.857	0.908	0.766
	RIT2	The customers planned to visit more often.	0.837			
	RIT3	The customers are most likely to visit the next time.	0.870			
Service Encounter	SEC1	Personally, the waiters willingly assisted guests.	0.956	0.953	0.97	0.914
	SEC2	Based on personal opinion, the waiters were courteous to the guests who visited.	0.960			
	SEC3	In line with respective opinion. the waiters paid attention to the guests.	0.952			

CA=Cronbach Alpha. CR=Composite Reliability. AVE=Average Variance Extracted

The next step included evaluating the construct reliability through CR and CA values. However, both showed satisfactory reliability, with all indicators surpassing 0.7 without exceeding the upper limit of 0.95 as shown in Table 2. To ensure the validity of the measurement model, AVE was assessed, showing that all constructs achieved values equal to or greater than 0.5. This showed that each construct accounted for a minimum of 50% variance in the respective indicators. Discriminate validity was further scrutinized using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT), which implied values less than the recommended threshold of 0.90 for all constructs as shown in Table 3. The entire process affirmed the empirical distinctiveness and accurate measurement within the model. The evaluation procedure incorporated fundamental metrics such as R^2, and Q^2_predict for predictive accuracy and relevance, respectively including the significance and magnitude of path coefficients to support the proposed hypotheses. Prior to this, the assessment of inner variance inflation factor (VIF) showed that values less than 3 for all constructs, depicted the absence of common method bias attributable to measurement error or respondent partiality in the model.

Table 3: Discriminant validity

Variable	AEDE	CEDE	CIT	ETA	EFA	RIT	SEC
AEDE							
CEDE	0.874						
CIT	0.822	0.741					
ETA	0.726	0.735	0.692				
EFA	0.790	0.835	0.716	0.829			
RIT	0.785	0.774	0.726	0.607	0.731		
SEC	0.823	0.710	0.724	0.649	0.694	0.674	

AEDE: affective ethnic dining experience, CEDE; cognitive dining experience, EFA: ethic food authenticity, ETA: ethnic ambiance, SEC: service encounters, CIT: customer interaction, RIT: revisit intention.

The AEDE and CEDE variables R^2 were 0.612, and 0,719, respectively showing strong predictive accuracy. Subsequently, the RIT variable, R^2 (0.519), was also presumed to have strong predictive accuracy. The results showed that this model had adequate predictive ability. Cognitive and affective dining experiences had a significant impact on RIT, with f^2 values of 0.087 and 0,167. The construct Q2_predict had medium predictive relevance for RIT (0.497). The results showed consistency in the model's predictive ability. Based on the criteria outlined by Hair et al. (2019), the PLS_predict output played a crucial role in evaluating predictive ability at the construct indicator level (Shmueli et al., 2019). Liengaard et al. (2021), stated that the Cross-Validated Predictive Ability Test (CVPAT) was advocated for evaluating prediction-oriented model comparisons within the PLS-SEM framework. In this context, when the results of the CVPAT were benchmarked against the indicator average (IA), a lower average loss value (negative) was obtained, exhibiting robust predictive validity (Sharma et al., 2022). The result was further substantiated by a comparative analysis with the linear model (LM), exhibiting a higher average loss value with negative outcomes and statistical significance.

Table 4: CVPAT

Variable	PLS-SEM vs Indicator Average (IA)		PLS-SEM vs Linear Model (LM)	
	Average loss difference	p-value	Average loss difference	p-value
Affective Ethnic Dining Experience	-0.462	0.000	-0.019	0.004
Cognitive Ethnic Dining Experience	-0.535	0.000	-0.006	0.652
Revisit intention	-0.413	0.000	-0.041	0.005
Overall Model	-0.469	0.000	-0.022	0.001

The analysis of the structural model aimed to assess the relationships among latent variables within the proposed framework. During the first phase, a one-tailed hypothesis testing procedure was adopted based on the hypotheses proposed (Hair et al.

2019). Building upon the description, hypothesis testing was performed using the bootstrapping method through SmartPLS® 4.0.8.7 software. This non-parametric method adopted resampling measures to ascertain coefficient significance (Shmueli et al., 2019). Before hypothesis testing, the inner model's output was carefully evaluated and reported to gauge its quality in respect to empirical research. The main quality parameters assessed in the inner model included VIF, R2, f2, and Q2_predict (Hair et al., 2019; Shmueli et al., 2019). The results of the second-stage inner model were derived from 10,000 resampling iterations in the bootstrapping process. The diagram of the inner model shows these outcomes, showing a framework consisting of the dependent, mediating, independent, and control variables. In this visual representation, path p-values were shown, depicting significant relationships where $p < 0.05$ (Hair et al., 2019). A comprehensive depiction of the inner model results, following the structured method advocated by prior research (Hair et al. 2019), starting with an assessment of model quality essential for ensuring measurement fit akin to covariance-based methods. This led to the verification that each path exhibited a statistically significant relationship. A detailed clarification of the inner model evaluation was articulated based on recommendations (Sarstedt et al., 2022a)

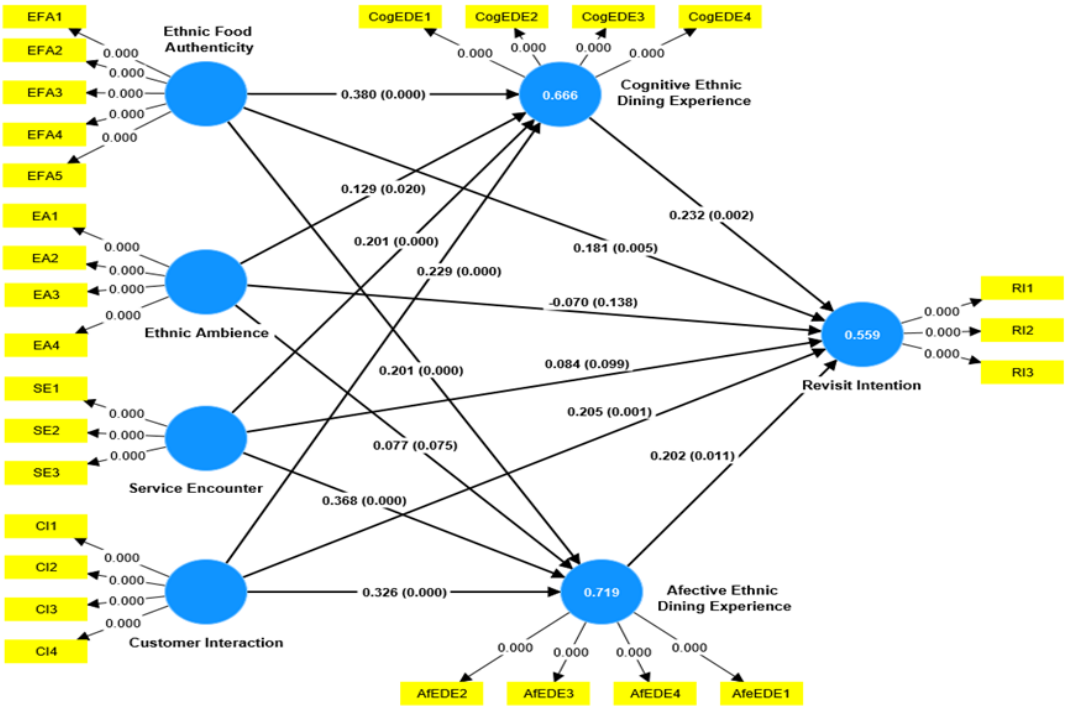

Figure 2: Inner model

During the structural model analysis, a critical step in addressing the research questions included testing the significance of the five hypothesised paths. This phase aimed to determine whether the relationships among the variables were statistically significant and generalisable to the broader population. The analysis adopted the bootstrapping method with resampling, conducted using SmartPLS® version 4.0.8.7 (Hair Jr., 2020; Ringle & Sarstedt, 2016). The evaluation of the hypotheses was based on two main empirical indicators, namely the significance level (p-value) and path coefficient. Considering that the hypotheses were directional and tested using a one-tailed method, the direction of the coefficient must conform with the hypothesised relationship. A p-value of less than 0.05 showed that the hypothesis was supported (Hair et al., 2019). The results from the hypothesis testing conducted in this research were outlined as follows

Table 5: Hypotheses test result

Hypotheses		Std. Coefficient	P-values	Confidence Interval		Result	f^2
				5.0%	95.0%		
H1	Ethnic Food Authenticity -> Cognitive Ethnic Dining Experience	0.367	0.000	0.280	0.461	Hypothesis Supported	0.133
H2	Ethnic Food Authenticity -> Affective Ethnic Dining Experience	0.201	0.000	0.118	0.285	Hypothesis Supported	0.055
H3	Ethnic Ambience -> Cognitive Ethnic Dining Experience	0.130	0.036	0.009	0.242	Hypothesis Supported	0.017
H4	Ethnic Ambience -> Affective Ethnic Dining Experience	0.077	0.081^{ns}	-0.016	0.165	Hypothesis Not Supported	0.008
H5	Service Encounter -> Cognitive Ethnic Dining Experience	0.179	0.001	0.083	0.272	Hypothesis Supported	0.038
H6	Service Encounter -> Affective Ethnic Dining Experience	0.368	0.000	0.271	0.453	Hypothesis Supported	0.221
H7	Customer Interaction -> Cognitive Ethnic Dining Experience	0.223	0.000	0.137	0.322	Hypothesis Supported	0.056
H8	Customer Interaction -> Affective Ethnic Dining Experience	0.327	0.000	0.232	0.443	Hypothesis Supported	0.165
H9	Cognitive Ethnic Dining Experience -> Revisit Intention	0.320	0.000	0.208	0.435	Hypothesis Supported	0.087
H10	Affective Ethnic Dining Experience -> Revisit Intention	0.444	0.000	0.323	0.563	Hypothesis Supported	0.167
H11	Ethnic Food Authenticity -> Revisit Intention	0.181	0.005	0.003	0.067	Hypothesis Supported	0.113
H12	Ethnic Ambience -> Revisit Intention	-0.070	0.138^{ns}	0.000	0.028	Hypothesis Not Supported	0.325
H13	Service Encounter -> Revisit Intention	0.084	0.099^{ns}	0.000	0.032	Hypothesis Not Supported	0.294
H14	Customer Interaction -> Revisit Intention	0.205	0.011	0.009	0.080	Hypothesis Supported	0.061

ns: not significant. std: standardized

Table 4 showed that 11 of the 14 hypotheses tested in the research model had coefficient values that were significantly supported. However, three of the hypotheses had insignificant results. Based on the results of hypothesis testing, the variables that had the strongest influence on cognitive dining experience were ethnic food authenticity (=0.367), customer interaction (=233), and service encounter (=0.179). The variables that had the strongest influence on affective experience were service encounter (=0.368), customer interaction (=0.327), and ethnic food authenticity (=0.201). Cognitive and affective experiences also had a positive (=0.320) and dominant relationship to revisit intention (=0.444). Specific effect to determine the relationship between variables indirectly included a mediator between the two variables. In this context, a variable is regarded as intervening or mediating if the value of t statistic > t table with p value < 0.05. Table 6 showed the t-statistic value was in a row above the t-table, while the empirical results proved that affective dining experience served as a mediating variable in the relationship between ethnic food authenticity and ambiance with revisit intention. This variable did not exhibit a mediating effect in the association between service encounter and customer interaction with revisit intention. The analysis showed that cognitive dining experience was a mediator in the association between ethnic ambiance and service encounter with revisit intention. However, cognitive dining experience did not mediate the relationship between ethnic ambiance and service encounter with revisit intention.

Tabel 6: Specific indirect effect

Relationship Between Variables	Original Sampel	t-Statistic	PValue	Information
Ethnic Food_ Authenticity -> Afective Ethnic _Dining Experience -> Revisit Intention	0.053	2.335	0.041	A Mediating Variabel
Ethnic Ambience -> Afective Ethnic _Dining Experience -> Revisit Intention	0.016	1.161	0.016	A Mediating Variabel
Service Encounter -> Afective Ethnic _Dining Experience -> Revisit Intention	0.041	1.921	0.074	Not a Mediating Variabel
Customer Interaction -> Cognitive Ethnic _Dining Experience -> Revisit Intention	0.088	2.649	0.053	Not a Mediating Variabel
Ethnic Food_ Authenticity -> Cognitive Ethnic _Dining Experience -> Revisit Intention	0.030	1.665	0.088	Not a Mediating Variabel
Ethnic Ambience -> Cognitive Ethnic _Dining Experience -> Revisit Intention	0.074	2.133	0.030	A Mediating Variabel
Service Encounter -> Cognitive Ethnic _Dining Experience -> Revisit Intention	0.046	2.215	0.046	A Mediating Variabel
Customer Interaction -> Afective Ethnic _Dining Experience -> Revisit Intention	0.066	2.031	0.066	Not a Mediating Variabel

Discussion

This research showed a theoretically grounded and empirically supported mediation structure, in which affective and cognitive dining experiences served as distinct psychological mechanisms connecting ethnic restaurant attributes to revisit intention. Based on the Experiential Theory proposed by Schmitt (1999), the results outlined that consumer behaviour in ethnic dining contexts was influenced by general and multisensory experiences, including emotional (affective) and rational (cognitive) dimensions aside from functional attributes. Ethnic food authenticity was regarded as the most powerful dual-channel stimulus, significantly enhancing both affective and cognitive experiences. This confirmed that authentic cuisine generated strong cultural associations (cognitive) while inducing emotional attachment (affective), in line with Schmitt's feel and think experiential modules (Lu et al., 2023). Ethnic ambience influenced solely cognitive dimension, suggesting that symbolic environmental cues mainly triggered reflective evaluations rather than emotional immersion. These results implied that the atmosphere should be in line with the consumer's cultural familiarity to activate the sense and feeling dimensions of the experiential response. Both service encounters and customer interactions improved affective and cognitive experiences (Zhang et al.,2023). Customer interaction directly influenced revisit intention, causing socially and culturally embedded interpersonal engagement to induce immediate and meaningful related experiences that bypassed cognitive mediation, directly shaping behaviour (Han and Hyun, 2023). In this context, service encounter often regarded as an aspect of expected norms required deeper cognitive elaboration to contribute meaningfully to revisit intention (Kandampully et al. 2021). The mediation analysis further showed these differentiated experiential pathways. Affective experience completely mediated the impact of food authenticity and ambience on revisit intention (H15, H16). Meanwhile, cognitive experience mediated the effects of service encounter and ambience (H20, H21). These results were in line with Schmitt's experiential framework, where emotionally salient cues (e.g., food and human interaction) engaged the feel and relate modules, with more symbolic or evaluative attributes (e.g., ambience, service) stimulating the think domain. The rejection of several direct paths (e.g., H4, H12, H13) showed that external restaurant attributes influenced revisit intention only when processed as meaningful experiences, rather than through linear stimulus-response logic. This led to challenges with traditional hospitality frameworks (Walls et al., 2020), supporting a multi-dimensional, experiential perspective in terms of understanding consumer decision-making. Empirically, the proposed model showed substantial explanatory power, with an R^2 value of 0.519 for revisit intention, implying a strong level of explained variance. The model also exhibited high predictive validity, as assessed through the CVPAT method a more robust alternative to blindfolding in PLS-SEM outlining the potential for future replication and generalisation. Based on a managerial perspective, these results urged ethnic restaurant operators to function beyond superficial cultural shows and instead craft experientially rich environments that resonate emotionally and intellectually with diners. By differentiating which stimuli triggered affective engagement (e.g., food authenticity, customer interaction) and provoked cognitive appraisal (e.g., ambience, service), the research provided actionable insights into designing effective customer experiences. The stronger predictive power of affective experience suggested that emotional connections were more influential than rational evaluations in generating revisit intention a crucial consideration for experience-oriented marketing strategies. Additionally, certain limitations were also acknowledged, alongside the absence of consumer personality segmentation which overlooked individual differences in experiential processing. This included significant cognitive engagement among open consumers or stronger interpersonal interaction with extroverted individuals. Future research should incorporate personality traits as moderating variables to capture more nuanced behavioural patterns. The urban sample may limit generalizability to ethnic restaurants in tourist destinations, where motivations were perceived as more exploratory and experiential. Despite these limitations, the present research

significantly advanced hospitality and consumer behaviour literature by applying Schmitt's experiential theory to empirically disclose the multi-layered psychological processes through which ethnic dining experiences influenced revisit intention.

Conclusion and implications

In conclusion, this research proved that revisit intention in ethnic restaurants was shaped through distinct affective and cognitive experiences, as proposed by Schmitt's Experiential Theory. Ethnic food authenticity activated both emotional and rational responses, while ambience and service attributes mainly influenced cognitive evaluations. Additionally, customer interaction directly enhanced revisit intention, outlining the critical role of socially immersive experiences. The proposed model showed strong explanatory and predictive power, focusing on the critical role of immersive, emotionally resonant, and cognitively stimulating experiences in shaping consumer behaviour. Practically, ethnic restaurant managers should focus on creating an all-inclusive experience that goes beyond superficial cultural elements to build sustainable loyalty. This research advanced the application of experiential theory in hospitality by empirically showing the dual mediation of affective and cognitive experiences in influencing behavioural intention. It challenged LM, outlining the differentiated psychological pathways through which consumers process ethnic dining experiences.

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