The congruity between social factors and theme of ethnic restaurant: its impact on

customer's perceived authenticity and behavioural intentions

Authors

Hanqun Song, Ph.D.

Huddersfield Business School,

University of Huddersfield, Queensgate, HD1 3DH, West Yorkshire, UK

Email: h.song@hud.ac.uk

Bich Van Phan

Huddersfield Business School,

University of Huddersfield, HD1 3DH, West Yorkshire UK

Email: vanphan1610@hotmail.com

Jong-Hyeong Kim, Ph.D. (Corresponding Author)

School of Tourism Management, Sun Yat-sen University,

135 Road Xin Gang Xi, Guangzhou, China, 510275

Email: jhkim96@gmail.com

Tel: +86-20-8411-4584; Fax: +86-20-8411-4569

The congruity between social factors and the theme of an ethnic restaurant: the impact on the customer's perceived authenticity and behavioural intentions

Abstract

Consumers are eager to experience authentic food and culture in ethnic restaurants. In addition to the verified antecedents of perceived authenticity, such as food and environment-related attributes, restaurant authenticity studies have recently started to examine the effect of the social factors of ethnic restaurants, such as the employees and other customers, on customers' authenticity perceptions. Drawing from the congruity theory, the current study moves a step further to identify that the congruity among employees' ethnic appearances, other customers' ethnic appearances, and the ethnic restaurant's theme, as well as customers' knowledge of the ethnic cuisine, influence customers' authenticity perceptions. This study offers suggestions to ethnic restaurants to increase the customers' perceived authenticity and behavioural intentions.

Keywords: authenticity, ethnic restaurant, customers' prior knowledge, employee ethnic background, other customers' ethnic background

1. Introduction

Servicescape refers to the physical environment of a service context, including the exterior and interior design (e.g., building design, signs, symbols, and artefacts) and ambient conditions (e.g., temperature, light, scent, noise, odour, and music) (Bitner, 1992; Raajpoot, 2002). However, in the service context, such as a restaurant, customers not only interact with the physical environment but also interact directly or indirectly with social elements, such as employees or other customers (Jani & Han, 2013; Miao & Mattila, 2013). These social components are referred to as the social servicescape (Hanks & Line, 2018; Jang, Ro, & Kim, 2015). In recent years, studies have started to examine various perspectives of the social servicescape due to its significant influence on customers' attitudes, satisfaction, and loyalty (Jang et al., 2015; Miao & Mattila, 2013). Relevant research areas include communications between employees and customers (Dong & Siu, 2013) and characteristics of employees and other customers, including perceived similarity, physical appearance, suitable behaviour (Hanks & Line, 2018), ethnicity of employees (Kim & Baker, 2017), and ethnicity of other customers (Wang & Mattila, 2015).

The current study examines customers' authenticity perceptions towards ethnic restaurants. Similar to the servicescape studies, the existing literature on ethnic restaurants has mainly focused on food-related and physical-related elements contributing to the customer's perceived authenticity (Jang, Liu, & Namkung, 2011; Kim & Jang, 2016; Youn & Kim, 2017). For example, they found that genuine cuisine and cultural cues (e.g., décor, music, costumes, and design) are effective to provide unique and authentic cultural experiences to customers (e.g., Ebster & Guist, 2005; Tsai & Lu, 2012). Little attention has been paid to the effect of social-related factors (e.g., employees and other customers) on the customer's authenticity perceptions and behaviours, except for Kim and Baker (2017) and Wang and Mattila (2015). More precisely, both studies examined the effect of the ethnic

appearance of other customers (Wang & Mattila, 2015) and employees (Kim & Baker, 2017) on customers' authenticity perceptions. In addition to examining the ethnic appearance of other customers and employees, the congruity among the ethnic appearance of other customers, employees, and the restaurant theme might result in customers' authenticity perceptions based on the congruity theory. However, little empirical evidence can be found on this proposition. Because other customers' ethnic backgrounds significantly influence dining experiences (Mattila & Wirtz, 2008; Miao & Mattila, 2013; Wu, Mattila, & Han, 2014) and the restaurateurs can develop a specific positioning strategy to target a specific group of customers, it is important to examine the influence of this variable on the perceived authenticity and behavioural intentions.

In addition to the social factors, customers' knowledge of the ethnic cuisine was found to affect their authenticity perceptions (Ebster & Guist, 2005). For example, focusing on objective knowledge, Ebster and Guist (2005) found that customers with high familiarity judge ethnic restaurants as less authentic than those with low familiarity. Moreover, Wang and Mattila (2015), adopting subjective knowledge, note that familiarity moderates the relationship between authenticity perception and behavioural intention. However, previous studies may not measure customers' knowledge properly because customers' knowledge of ethnic cuisines should be assessed through both objective and subjective perspectives (Gursoy & McCleary, 2004). In addition, previous studies only examined the effect of familiarity on authenticity perception and the role of familiarity in moderating the influence of perceived authenticity on behavioural intention. Therefore, the following research questions have not been answered: 1) Does customers' knowledge influence their behavioural intentions? 2) Does customers' knowledge moderate the relationship among social factors, authenticity perception, and behavioural intentions?

In summary, the primary purpose of this study is to examine the influence of social factors on consumers' behaviours in the ethnic dining setting. We also examined the moderating role of customers' knowledge of ethnic cuisines. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1. Does the ethnic background of service employees and other customers influence the diners' perceived authenticity and future behavioural intention?

RQ 2. Is there an interaction effect between the ethnic background of service employees and other customers on the diners' perceived authenticity and future behavioural intention?

RQ 3. Does the customers' prior knowledge of ethnic cuisines influence the ethnic diners' perceived authenticity and future behavioural intentions?

RQ 4. Does the customers' prior knowledge of ethnic cuisines moderate the influence of social factors (i.e., the ethnic background of service employees and other customers) on the perceived authenticity and future behavioural intention?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Authenticity of ethnic restaurants

The research on authenticity in tourism dates back to the early 1970s, and the definition of authenticity has not been consistently defined (Xie, 2003). According to Trilling (1972), the original usage of authenticity was in museums and referred to the question of whether objects of art are what they appear to be or are claimed to be by the experts in the field and, therefore, are worth the price that is asked for them. Ethnic restaurants in a foreign country, however, have a limited ability to deliver authentic experiences, as they are based in a foreign country. Ethnic restaurants often serve ethnic cuisines targeting local people in a

foreign country, and they may have difficulty obtaining the exact same ingredients that are used in their home country and/or follow traditional cooking methods. This geographical location where ethnic restaurants are located would hinder individuals from developing authentic experiences, particularly objective authenticity that refers to being genuine or real (i.e., the museum sense of authenticity, Wang, 1999). Another school of authenticity, constructive authenticity, is not about answering the question of truth but interpretation of the fact (Frisvoll, 2013), which results from individuals' different social beliefs, expectations, preferences and perceptions (Kim & Bonn, 2016). In the ethnic restaurant context, constructive viewpoints on authenticity noted that staged, prepared, and packaged experiences to frame the culture of an ethnic restaurant can still constitute an authentic experience (e.g., Cohen, 1988).

In line with this notion, ethnic restaurants endeavour to establish authenticity in the pseudo-event settings by satisfying the customers' perceived attributes of ethnic foods (Jang, Ha, & Silkes, 2009; Roseman, 2006). For example, previous researchers have widely examined the influence of food-related factors (e.g., ingredients) as well as physical environmental/atmospheric factors on authenticity perception (Jang et al., 2011; Kim & Jang, 2016; Kim, Youn, & Rao, 2017; Tsai & Lu, 2012). However, relatively less attention has been paid to social factors (e.g., ethnicity of employees) in this topical area (Kim & Baker, 2017). Therefore, grounded in congruity theory, the current study investigates the influence of social factors (both employees and customers) on the perceived authenticity and behavioural intention.

2.2. Congruity theory

Congruity theory suggests that individuals are likely to develop positive attitudes towards an object when they perceive the object is consistent with what they hold (Osgood &

Tannenbaum, 1955). In the literature, the concept of congruity has been examined from two different perspectives, congruity between different elements of a service/product and congruity between a consumer and a product/tourist destination. For example, in terms of the congruity between different elements of a service/product, previous studies on the congruity between scent and music in retailing (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001) and the congruity between advertisement and context (Zanjani, Diamond, & Chan, 2011) show that the higher the congruity between different elements is, the more likely participants are to have a higher level of recall and recognition and a higher positive evaluation and behavioural intention. The perspective of self-congruity focuses on the degree of match between an individual's self-image and a product (or a tourist destination) image (Sirgy & Su, 2000). The greater the match between a consumer's self-image and the product image is, the more likely the person is to have a higher positive attitude towards the product (the destination) (Hung & Petrick, 2011; Sirgy & Su, 2000).

2.3. The effect of congruity between the employees' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant [congruity between employees and the restaurant]

Employees of service organisations (e.g., restaurants), as an important vector for service delivery, may directly affect customers' perceptions and behaviours (e.g., willingness to purchase) towards the service organisation (Kelley & Hoffman, 1997; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). Furthermore, employees' physical and demographic characteristics (e.g., appearance, attractiveness, ethnicity, gender, and uniforms) and behaviours (e.g., smile, and friendliness) also influence customers' perceptions and behaviours (Magnini, Baker, & Karande, 2013; Mattila & Wirtz, 2008; Turley & Milliman, 2000; Wu, Han, & Mattila, 2016). Previous studies (Wu et al., 2016) found that staff members' characteristics (i.e., ethnicity and gender) influence the customer's reactions to service failure. For example, in

the US, due to the ethnic and gender-based stereotyping, a service failure caused by a Hispanic female manager (vs. Caucasian female manager) generated higher levels of negative effects and behavioural intentions (Wu et al., 2016).

In the ethnic restaurant, there is a positive relationship between employees' ethnic backgrounds and the customers' authenticity perceptions. Customers perceive food and the dining experience in an ethnic restaurant as more authentic when the food is prepared by and served by local people, showing that service providers play a significant role in shaping the customer's perceived authenticity of the ethnic restaurant (Jang et al., 2011; Lu & Fine, 1995). Using Korean food in China as an example, Kim and Jang (2016) found that Chinese customers considered the Korean food served by Koreans as more authentic than the Korean food served by Chinese. Similarly, in a Korean restaurant in the United States, the appearance of a Korean employee significantly increases customers' authenticity on the food, employee, and culture (Kim & Baker, 2017). According to the congruity theory, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H1: The congruity between the employees' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant positively affects the customer's perceived authenticity

As previous research has mainly examined the influence of the employees' ethnic backgrounds on the customers' perceived authenticity, less is known about the influence of that on behavioural intention. Behavioural intentions include consumers' intentions to make a purchase and recommendation, including willingness to purchase (repurchase), and willingness to recommend to others (Jang & Namkung, 2009). According to the congruity theory, the higher the congruity between different elements is, the more likely that

participants will have a higher level of behavioural intention (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001). Thus, the following hypothesis is developed:

H2: The congruity between the employees' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant positively affects the customer's intentions to purchase and spread positive word-of-mouth.

2.4. The effect of congruity between other customers' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant [congruity between other customers and the restaurant]

Other customers in a service context offer an important environmental cue to consumers to make a judgement and a purchase decision (Baker, Parasuraman, Grewal, & Voss, 2002). Previous studies confirm the effect of the presence and behaviour of other customers (e.g., the number of other customers [crowding], proximity, similarity, characteristics, interaction between other customers and the employees, interactions between customers and other customers, and the visible consumption and purchasing activities of other customers) on an individual's perception (e.g., customer's evaluation of the store), behaviour (e.g., purchasing intention) (e.g., Brocato, Voorhees, & Baker, 2012; Fransen, Smeesters, & Fennis, 2011; Grewal, Baker, Levy, & Voss, 2003; Söderlund, 2011), and emotional reactions (e.g., emotional responses and emotional-regulation strategies) (Miao & Mattila, 2013).

There is no study confirming the causal relationship between the appearance of other customers and the customer's authenticity perceptions. However, other customers who are from the same culture as the ethnic theme of a restaurant could serve as a vital informational cue for customers to make an evaluation of the restaurant's authenticity. According to the congruity theory, this study proposed the following hypothesis:

H3: The congruity between other customers' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant positively affects the customer's perceived authenticity.

In literature, some researchers examined the influence of other customers on future behaviour. However, to the best of our knowledge, none of the previous studies have examined the direct effect of other customers' ethnic backgrounds on behavioural intention. According to the congruity theory, if there is a congruity between other customers' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant, then customers are more likely to visit the ethnic restaurant. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: The congruity between other customers' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant positively affects customers' intentions to purchase and spread positive word-of-mouth.

2.5. The interaction effect between 'congruity between employees and the restaurant' and 'congruity between other customers and the restaurant' on the customers' perceived authenticity and behavioural intentions

There are two types of social interactions in the service environment, namely, social interactions between customers and service providers (Bitner, 1992) and social interactions between customers and other customers (Miao & Mattila, 2013). Some studies have separately confirmed the impact of employees' and other customers' characteristics (i.e., ethnicity, gender, proximity, and similarity) on customers' perceptions (e.g., evaluations and perceived authenticity) and behavioural intentions (e.g., purchasing intentions) (Brocato et al., 2012; Kim & Baker, 2017; Lu & Fine, 1995; Wu et al., 2016). However, the effect of other customers' appearances on customers' authenticity perceptions may be dependent on

whether there is a fit between other customers' appearances and employees' appearances in the ethnic restaurant. Congruity theory indicates that when there is a match between different elements of a brand/store, customers have a more positive evaluation towards the brand/store than a situation of mismatch (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001). Therefore, we propose that if there is congruity between the ethnic appearance of other customers and employees, as well as restaurant theme, customers will perceive a higher level of authenticity and behavioural intention than that of an incongruity situation. On the other hand, when there is incongruity between employees' ethnic appearances, as well as other customers' ethnic appearances, and the restaurant theme, customers will perceive a lower level of authenticity and exhibit a lower level of behavioural intention than that of a congruity situation. In support of this proposition, we advance the following hypotheses:

H5: There is an interaction effect between 'congruity between employees and the restaurant' and 'congruity between other customers and the restaurant' on the customers' perceived authenticity.

H6: There is an interaction effect between 'congruity between employees and the restaurant' and 'congruity between other customers and the restaurant' on the customers' behavioural intentions.

2.6. The effect of prior knowledge about the cuisine on the customers' perceived authenticity and behavioural intentions

Customers' previous service experiences and knowledge may influence their evaluation of the service or products (Devlin, 2011; Klerck & Sweeney, 2007; Liljander & Mattsson, 2002). There are two types of consumer's prior knowledge: subjective and objective. Subjective knowledge, also referred as familiarity (Gursoy & McCleary, 2004),

relates to how much an individual thinks he/or she knows (Brucks, 1985). Objective

knowledge is defined as the accurate information stored in his or her memory for a long term

(Brucks, 1985). The objective knowledge can be developed from using previous

products/services or gaining information by research (Brucks, 1985). Based on the above

information, subjective knowledge is mainly based on own self-perception, such as

evaluation and judgement, whereas objective knowledge is based on accurate or factual

information (e.g., true or false) in people's minds.

Previous hospitality studies (e.g., Ebster & Guist, 2005; Wang & Mattila, 2015) focus

on either subjective knowledge or objective knowledge in their studies. However, Gursoy and

McCleary (2004) emphasise that it is necessary to include both subjective and objective types

to measure customer knowledge. However, no previous studies have examined these two

kinds of customer knowledge simultaneously. Focusing on objective knowledge, Ebster and

Guist (2005) identified that the higher the customers' knowledge of and experiences with

Italian culture are, the lower the authenticity level that they experience in ethnic Italian

restaurants. However, previous researchers discussed an opposite direction of the influence of

customers' knowledge on behavioural intentions. For example, Jang and Kim (2015)

suggested that cultural familiarity significantly enhances behavioural intention to purchase,

thereby reducing the perceived risk of trying ethnic foods. More specifically, the higher the

American customers' cultural familiarity level with Korean culture is, the higher the

customers' intentions to try Korean food (Jang & Kim, 2015). The above discussion shows

that individuals' knowledge levels have a relationship with authenticity perception and

behavioural intention. However, further empirical evidence should be provided to clarify the

contradictory finding on the perceived authenticity and behavioural intention. Based upon the

current literature, we propose:

H7: The customers' prior knowledge about the cuisine negatively influences their perceived authenticity.

H8: The customers' prior knowledge about the cuisine positively influences their behavioural intentions.

Without investigating the impact of familiarity on customers' authenticity perceptions, Wang and Mattila (2015) argue that the relationship between the perceived authenticity and behavioural intention is not always positive, and familiarity plays a moderating role between authenticity perception and behavioural intention. For customers who are familiar with the ethnic cuisine (e.g., Chinese who are familiar with Chinese cuisine), there is a positive relationship between perceived authenticity and behavioural intention. However, for customers who are not familiar with the ethnic cuisine (e.g., Americans who are not familiar with Chinese cuisine), there is not a positive relationship. Possible reasons are low-knowledge customers are more likely to use extrinsic cues (e.g., employees and other customers in an ethnic restaurant) to judge the product quality than are high-knowledge customers. However, high-knowledge customers have the ability to evaluate the product quality based on the intrinsic cues, such as food and presentation of the dish (Wang & Mattila, 2015). The study by Wang and Mattila (2015) shows that familiarity plays an important role in influencing customers' behavioural intentions. Based on the above statement, this paper proposed four hypotheses:

H9a: The customer's prior knowledge moderates the effect of 'congruity between employees and the restaurant' on the perceived authenticity. Specifically, the positive effect of 'congruity between employees and the restaurant' on the perceived authenticity is stronger when the knowledge level is low.

H9b: The customer's prior knowledge moderates the effect of 'congruity between employees and the restaurant' on behavioural intention. Specifically, the positive effect of 'congruity between employees and the restaurant' on behavioural intention is stronger when the knowledge level is low.

H10a: The customers' prior knowledge moderates the effect of 'congruity between other customers and the restaurant' on the perceived authenticity. Specifically, the positive effect of 'congruity between other customers and the restaurant' on the perceived authenticity is stronger when the knowledge level is low.

H10b: The customers' prior knowledge moderates the effect of 'congruity between other customers and the restaurant' on behavioural intention. Specifically, the positive effect of 'congruity between other customers and the restaurant' on behavioural intention is stronger when the knowledge level is low.

2.7. The proposed hypothetical model

Unlike other factors, such as food and atmosphere, little research has investigated the effect of social factors in the ethnic dining setting. Based on the literature, this study posits that social factors significantly affect both perceived authenticity and behavioural intention. The hypothesized causal paths are depicted in Figure 1.

(Insert Figure 1 here)

3. Method

3.1. Design and stimulus selection

This study employed a 2 (congruity between the employees' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant: Yes vs. No) x 2 (congruity between other customers' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant: Yes vs. No) x 2 (customers' prior knowledge: High vs. Low) between-subject design approach (scenarios are shown in Appendix 1). This study used a new Chinese restaurant in a city centre in England as the context. 'congruity between the employees' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant: Yes or No' was manipulated using Chinese or White British employees in the scenario. For example, the scenario including Chinese employees indicated 'congruity between the employees' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant'; whereas the scenario including White British employees indicated 'incongruity between the employees' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant'. Similarly, 'congruity between other customers' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant: Yes or No' was manipulated using Chinese or White British other customers in the scenario. For example, the scenario including Chinese other customers indicated 'congruity between other customers' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant'; whereas the scenario including White British other customers indicated 'incongruity between other customers' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant'. The customers' prior knowledge level was determined by the total value of subjective and objective knowledge. The values ranged from 2.80 to 11.60, with the mean value being 7.38. To ensure a roughly equal cell size for each experimental condition, the researchers used the value of 7.5 as a cut-off value to determine the two groups: high-knowledge group ($M \geq 7.5$) and low-knowledge group ($M < 7.5$). Altogether there were 112 high-knowledge subjects, and 108 low-knowledge subjects.

3.2. Measure

Both multi-item scales and multiple-choice questions were used in the survey. Participants' subjective knowledge, perceived authenticity, and behavioural intentions were measured using 7-point Likert scales (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) (survey items are shown in Appendix 2). Specifically, respondents' subjective knowledge was measured by using five items adapted from previous studies (Flynn & Goldsmith, 1999; Gursoy & McCleary, 2004) (Cronbach's α= .72). The perceived authenticity was measured using three items adapted from Wang and Mattila (2015) (Cronbach's α= 0.95), and behavioural intentions were evaluated by three items (Cronbach's α= 0.92). In contrast, respondents' objective knowledge was tested through five multiple choice questions on Chinese food, drinks, and tradition from the website of http://chinesequiz.com/. Every objective knowledge question had a correct answer. If participants answered a question correctly, then they received one point for that question.

We also included questions to check realism and manipulation. The participants were asked to evaluate the realism of the scenario by answering "how likely is it that the described experience in the scenario would happen in the real life?" Moreover, the ethnic background of employees and other customers in each individual scenario were checked with manipulation. Two manipulation questions were asked: Q1. Who are the chefs and servers in the scenario? (Answer: Chinese or White British) and Q2. Who are the major customers of the restaurant in the scenario? (Answer: Chinese or White British). The manipulation check of categorical variables was well used by studies (Weber, Hsu, & Sparks, 2016; Weber, Sparks, & Hsu, 2016). In terms of data analysis, a three-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to test the effect of three independent variables on the perceived authenticity and behavioural intention.

3.3. Procedures

A Chinese restaurant in the UK was chosen as the context of this study because Chinese cuisine appeals to both ethnic and mainstream customers and has become one of the dominant ethnic cuisines in the UK (Warwicker, 2014). Before the main study, a pilot study with 30 University students in England was conducted to test the experiment. Subjects were all clear with the experiment and survey questions.

In the main study, using a snowball sampling approach, subjects from one of the largest towns in England were recruited to complete an online survey. Located in northern England, the town has a multi-cultural population of 162,949, including White (75.8%), Asian (14.9%), Black (4.2%), Arab (2.3%), mixed (3.8%), and other ethnic groups (0.7%) based on the most updated census in 2011 (Kirklees Council, 2018). According to the TripAdvisor page of the town, it has more than 400 different types of restaurants, including many ethnic restaurants, such as Indian, Chinese, Thai, American, Bangladeshi, Persian, Middle Eastern, and Japanese (TripAdvisor, 2018). All of this type of information shows that the town is a suitable place to conduct this study on ethnic restaurant authenticity, as this study aims to survey two types of participants, those with high prior knowledge and those with low prior knowledge of Chinese cuisine.

Snowball sampling was adopted in this study. Convenience sampling is an appropriate and reliable data collection method for experimental design (Kim & Jang, 2016), and snowball sampling is an extension of convenience sampling. Two researchers contacted their social network to collect data and invited those who completed the online survey to send the survey link to other people within the city. Altogether, 220 subjects completed the experiment (see Table 1), which supports previous studies (Park & Lessig, 1981; Pham, 1998) in that a cell size ranging from 17 and 30 is suitable for experimental design. Table 2 shows the sample size across each experimental condition.

(Insert Table 1 here)

(Insert Table 2 here)

4. Results

4.1. Realism and manipulation checks

The subjects perceived the scenarios as realistic with M = 5.05 and SD =1.57 (based on a 7-point scale) showing that the situations described in the scenarios, such as ethnic appearance of employees and other customers of the ethnic restaurant, are quite common in the UK. A Chi-square test with four types of scenarios (Chi-square = 12.57, df =18, and p = 0.817) shows that no significant differences are observed in realism checks across the four scenarios. Checks also confirm that the two independent variables are successfully manipulated. Significant differences in the Chi-square show that employees' ethnic appearances and other customers' ethnic appearances are effectively manipulated between Chinese and White British (see Table 3).

(Insert Table 3 here)

Independent t-tests for the mean value of the high-knowledge group (Number = 112, M = 9.20, SD = 1.09) and the low-knowledge group (Number = 108, M = 5.36, SD = 1.33) show that there is a significant difference between two groups (t = 23.458, df = 218, p < .000).

4.2. Customers' perceived authenticity and behavioural intentions

MANOVA results (see Table 4) show that there are significant main effects of the two independent variables of 'congruity between employees and the restaurant' and 'prior knowledge' on the customer's perceived authenticity and behavioural intentions at the multivariate level (congruity between employees and the restaurant: $F = 26.194$, Wilks' lambda $= .801$, $p < .000$, $\eta^2 = .199$; prior knowledge: $F = 3.513$, Wilks' lambda $= .968$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .032$).

(Insert Table 4 here)

Univariate results are shown in Table 5. In terms of univariate results, the main effect of 'congruity between employees and the restaurant' on the 'perceived authenticity' is significant ($M_{\text{Incongruity between employees and the restaurant}} = 3.78$ vs. $M_{\text{Congruity between employees and the restaurant}} = 5.20$, $F[1, 211] = 48.782$, $p < .000$). The results show that congruity between employees' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant leads to a significantly higher degree of perceived authenticity than incongruity between the employees' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant. When an ethnic restaurant (e.g., a Chinese restaurant) has the presence of ethnic employees (e.g., Chinese employees), consumers consider the ethnic restaurant (e.g., a Chinese restaurant) as more authentic than an ethnic restaurant (e.g., a Chinese restaurant) with the presence of mainstream employees (e.g., White British). Therefore, H1 is supported. In terms of the univariate results, the main effect of 'congruity between employees and the restaurant' on 'behavioural intention' is significant ($M_{\text{Incongruity between employees and the restaurant}} = 4.33$ vs. $M_{\text{Congruity between employees and the restaurant}} = 5.08$, $F[1, 211] = 14.236$, $p < .000$). The results show that the presence of Chinese employees in a Chinese restaurant leads to a significantly higher degree of behavioural intention than the

presence of White British employees in a Chinese restaurant. Consumers have significantly higher behavioural intentions towards the ethnic restaurant (e.g., a Chinese restaurant) with the presence of ethnic employees (e.g., Chinese employees) than the ethnic restaurant (e.g., a Chinese restaurant) with the presence of mainstream employees (e.g., White British). Therefore, H2 is supported. Contrary to our expectation, no main effect of 'congruity between other customers and the restaurant' on both the 'perceived authenticity' and 'behavioural intention' is observed ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, H3 and H4 are rejected.

(Insert Table 5 here)

Univariate results indicate that there is no significant interaction effect between 'congruity between employees and the restaurant' and 'congruity between other customers and the restaurant' on the 'perceived authenticity.' However, there is a significant interaction effect between 'congruity between employees and the restaurant' and 'congruity between other customers and the restaurant' on 'behavioural intention' ($F = [1, 211] = 4.425$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, H5 is rejected, and H6 is supported. Figure 2 shows that when there is a 'congruity between other customers and the restaurant' (in this study, the other customers were Chinese), there is a significant difference (t = 18.330, p < .000) in the ratings of behavioural intention between 'incongruity between employees and the restaurant' (in this study, White British employees) and 'congruity between employees and the restaurant' (in this study, Chinese employees) (M $_{\text{Incongruity between employees and the restaurant}}$ = 4.07 vs. M $_{\text{Congruity between employees and the restaurant}}$ = 5.21), showing that when there is a congruity between other customers' ethnic backgrounds and the employees' ethnic backgrounds, customers have a significantly higher behavioural intention than with incongruity of other customers' ethnic backgrounds and the employees' ethnic backgrounds.

Figure 3 shows that when there is an 'incongruity between employees and the restaurant' (in this study, White British employees), there is a significant difference (t = 4.343, p < .038) in the ratings of behavioural intention between 'incongruity between other customers and the restaurant' (in this study, White British customers) and 'congruity between other customers and the restaurant' (in this study, Chinese customers) (M $_{\text{Incongruity between other}}$ $_{\text{customers and the restaurant}}$ = 4.64 vs. M $_{\text{Congruity between other customers and the restaurant}}$ = 4.08), showing that when there is a congruity of 'incongruity between employees and the restaurant' and 'incongruity between other customers and the restaurant', customers have a significantly higher behavioural intention than in the incongruity situation.

(Insert Figure 2 here)

(Insert Figure 3 here)

The main effect of the 'customers' prior knowledge' on the 'perceived authenticity' is significant (M $_{\text{Low knowledge}}$ = 4.70 vs. M $_{\text{High knowledge}}$ = 4.25, F [1, 211] = 6.316, $p < 0.05$). The results show that the customers with low prior knowledge perceive the ethnic restaurant as more authentic than those with high prior knowledge. Therefore, H7 is supported. However, the main effect of the 'customers' prior knowledge' on 'behavioural intention' is insignificant. Thus, H8 is rejected. There is no significant interaction effect between the 'customers' prior knowledge' and 'congruity between employees and the restaurant', and no significant interaction effect between the 'customers' prior knowledge' and 'congruity between other customers and the restaurant' on the 'perceived authenticity' and 'behavioural intention'. Therefore, H9a, H9b, H10a, and H10b are all rejected.

5. **Discussion and conclusion**

5.1. Theoretical contribution

This study makes several theoretical contributions to the hospitality literature. First, this study contributes to the knowledge of researching social factors of the servicescape, as Hanks and Line (2018) stated that there is still little understanding of the social servicescape in the hospitality literature. The current study applies the concept of social factors of servicescape in the context of an ethnic restaurant to understand their impact on customers' authenticity and behavioural intentions. Rather than purely applying the ethnic appearance of employees and other customers in an ethnic restaurant context, the present study combines the ethnic appearance with the theme of the ethnic restaurant to create congruity and incongruity conditions to understand the impact of these conditions on customers' authenticity and behavioural intentions. Second, this study provides a new perspective to researching service quality. In addition to focusing on five classic aspects of service quality, such as tangibility, empathy, reliability, responsiveness, and assurance, the ethnic appearance of employees and the congruity of the ethnic appearance of employees and the theme of the ethnic restaurant could also influence the customer's behavioural intentions.

Third, focusing on two social factors from the scenarios (i.e., congruity between employees and the restaurant, and congruity between other customers and the restaurant) and one subject-related factor (i.e., customers' prior knowledge), this study verifies previous studies (Kim & Jang, 2016; Kim & Baker, 2017) in that employee ethnic appearance influences the customers' perceived authenticity of the related cuisine/restaurant. Previous studies (e.g., Wang & Mattila, 2015; Youn & Kim, 2017) have differing opinions about the mediating effect of the customers' perceived authenticity on the relationship between the antecedents of authenticity and behavioural intention; the current study empirically shows that congruity of employees and the restaurant directly impacts customers' behavioural

intentions without the mediating effect of the perceived authenticity. This study finds that without considering the ethnic restaurant as authentic or not, customers' behavioural intentions (e.g., likelihood of visit the restaurant and word-of-mouth) could be directly affected by the congruity between employees' ethnic appearance and the theme of an ethnic restaurant.

Fourth, this study reveals that there is a significant interaction effect of 'congruity between employees and the restaurant' and 'congruity between other customers and the restaurant' on customers' behavioural intentions. When there is a congruity between 'employees' ethnic backgrounds' and 'other customers' ethnic backgrounds (e.g., White British customers and white British employees, or Chinese customers and Chinese employees in an ethnic restaurant), individuals have high behavioural intentions, such as high interests in the restaurant and a high likelihood to recommend the restaurant to others. Despite no similar findings being identified in the hospitality literature, the results can be explained by Wang, Miao, and Mattila (2015) in that the high congruity of ethnicity between the customer and the service provider leads to more positive emotions for customers, and by Jang, Ha, and Park (2012) in that positive emotions lead to high revisit intentions. Therefore, this study contributes to the hospitality literature in that a high congruity of ethnic backgrounds between employees and other customers, no matter the theme of an ethnic restaurant, causes the customer's high behavioural intentions.

Fifth, this study finds that the customers' prior knowledge level influences the perceived authenticity. In particular, the customers with low prior knowledge have a significantly higher perceived authenticity than the customers with high prior knowledge. Previously, only one study by Ebster and Guist (2005) examined the impact of familiarity on the perceived authenticity using a questionnaire survey. The current study is the first experimental design study to empirically test the cause and outcome effect between the

customer's prior knowledge and the perceived authenticity. Ebster and Guist (2005) state that customers with a low familiarity with the origin culture of the ethnic restaurant judge the ethnic restaurant more authentic than those who were more familiar with the culture. Possible reasons could be customers with a high familiarity develop a sense of authenticity according to their first-hand experience with the restaurant's home culture, whereas customers with a low familiarity might not have such an experience, thus evaluating ethnic restaurants as more authentic (Ebster & Guist, 2005). In addition, Chang, Kivela, and Mak (2010) identified that most of the Chinese people travelling to Australia think that the Chinese food in Australia is not authentic and is not as good as that in Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. In this study, subjects were invited to evaluate a Chinese restaurant in England. Customers who are familiar with Chinese cuisine may perceive that the authentic Chinese cuisine is in China, rather than in the UK; therefore, those customers with a high prior knowledge level believe that the Chinese food in the UK is not very authentic.

Sixth, the findings of this study also rejected some hypotheses. This study found that other customers do not influence the customers' perceived authenticity and behavioural intentions. A growing number of Chinese restaurants currently in the UK target a mix of both mainstream and ethnic Chinese customers. Thus, British customers are not developing the authenticity perceptions or behavioural intentions purely based on the ethnicity of other customers in the Chinese restaurants. It is true that the Chinese cuisine has become one of the top ethnic cuisines in the UK, and British people have much knowledge and experience about the Chinese food (Mintel, 2016). Although UK citizens are generally familiar with Chinese cuisine, the sample showed significant variance in terms of knowledge about Chinese cuisine. Respondents can be classified into the highly familiar group and the moderately familiar group. However, contrary to previous studies (Jang & Kim, 2015; Kim & Jang, 2016), our study observes that the customers' prior knowledge does not influence their behavioural

intentions. Possible reasons could be customers with different levels of knowledge may have different motivations (e.g., experiencing exotic culture for customers with low knowledge or nostalgia on the familiar cuisine for customers with high knowledge) to visit a Chinese restaurant.

5.2. Managerial implications

In terms of managerial implications, ethnic restaurant operators should consider the results of this study. First, this study finds that congruity between the employees' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant influences the customers' perceived authenticity. For Chinese restaurants in the UK, to provide the authentic image to the potential or current customers, the managers should not only hire Caucasian staff members but also hire other staff from different cultural backgrounds (e.g., staff from the Far East) in the restaurants. In this situation, customers might consider a restaurant with oriental staff members as authentic and, therefore, are more likely to dine in the restaurant. This study indicates that customers with different prior knowledge have different authenticity perceptions towards the ethnic restaurant. Customers with high knowledge perceive the ethnic restaurant as less authentic than those with low knowledge. If some ethnic restaurants target ethnic customers, they need to think about how to enhance the perceived authenticity among those ethnic customers. Promotions to ethnic customers (e.g., a free sample of authentic food can be distributed to ethnic customers on the street) could enhance the authenticity of the ethnic restaurant. Including some signature ethnic dishes in brochures could persuade ethnic customers to visit the ethnic restaurant.

In terms of the effect of congruity of ethnicity between employees and other customers on the customer's behavioural intentions, ethnic restaurants have to understand their target market and positioning strategy. For example, if a Chinese restaurant targets

mainstream customers in the UK, it is better to hire a majority of White British employees. Otherwise, if a Chinese restaurant targets ethnic customers in the UK, it is better to hire a majority of Oriental (or Southeast Asian) employees. This type of strategy is not related to the perceived authenticity, but to behavioural intention. The match of ethnicity between the employees and the other customers could increase the customer's behavioural intentions.

5.3. Limitations and future research

There are some limitations and directions for future research. First, this study used chefs, waiters and waitresses to describe employees in the scenarios. Different employees in the ethnic restaurant may have a different impact on customers. For example, chefs who are responsible for cooking may have a larger impact on customers than waiters/waitresses who normally provide service to customers. Further studies could examine the impact of different employees on the customers' perceived authenticity and behavioural intentions. Second, this study used text descriptions and a picture in the scenarios. Information, such as 'beautiful Sunday' and a picture of 'traditional Chinese architecture' may influence consumers' perceptions, as previous studies (Magnini, Miller, & Kim, 2011) find that restaurant signboards affect the customers perceptions. In the future, the words "Today is a beautiful Sunday" and a photo of the outside of the restaurant could be control variables to compare with scenarios without this information to see whether including this information could influence subjects' perceptions. Third, this study does not examine the causal relationship between customers' authenticity perceptions and behavioural intentions. Future studies should investigate whether these two variables have a positive relationship. In terms of future research directions, this study identifies that the congruity of ethnic backgrounds between employees and other customers could lead to a high behavioural intention. One further question raised from this finding is 'Does the congruity among the ethnic appearance of

participants, ethnic appearance of employees, and ethnic appearance of other customers

influence the customers' perceived authenticity and behavioural intention?' Finally, the study

context, focusing on Chinese restaurants, could be a limitation, as Chinese cuisine is one of

the most popular cuisines in the UK, and British citizens normally have high knowledge and

experiences with Chinese cuisines. Our findings might be limited to the study context.

Appendix 1: Scenarios

Today is a beautiful Sunday. You have decided to have lunch in the city centre. You go outside and walk down the street to search for a suitable place for your lunch. You notice that a new Chinese restaurant is just around the corner. (The Chinese restaurant looks like the photo below). Through the glass window of the restaurant, you find that three *White British/Chinese* chefs are cooking in the open kitchen. You find that the majority of the servers (e.g., waiters and waitresses) are *White British/Chinese*. You take a look at the dining area and notice that the majority of the customers inside the restaurant are *White British/Chinese*.

Appendix 2: Survey items

Variable	Items	Reliability
Subjective knowledge	I know a great amount about Chinese culture and cuisine.	Cronbach's α= 0.72
	I know how to judge the quality of a Chinese dish.	
	Among my circle of friends, I am one of the 'experts' on Chinese ethnic culture and foods.	
	Compared to most other people, I know less about Chinese culture and foods [reverse coded].	
	Compared to people who eat out often, I am very familiar with Chinese ethnic restaurants.	
Objective knowledge (multiple choice questions)	What are the foods Chinese people traditionally eat to celebrate the Lunar New Year? A: Croissants, escargot, champagne B: Kiwi, oranges, apples, mango C: Dumplings, fish, rice cakes, spring rolls D: Corn, pie, biscuits, mashed potatoes What do the Chinese use most often to eat with? A: Forks B: Sporks C: Wrench D: Chopsticks What is the most popular drink in China? A: Milk B: Tea C: Coffee D: Coca Cola What is the colour of good fortune and joy? A: Green B: Red C: Yellow D: Blue Where did the fortune cookie originate from? A: Mainland China B: Hong Kong C: USA	Not available
Perceived authenticity	I think it is an authentic Chinese restaurant.	Cronbach's α= 0.95
	I think the restaurant makes me feel connected to Chinese culture.	
	I think the restaurant matches my impression of the Chinese culture.	
Behavioural intention	I am interested in dining in the restaurant.	Cronbach's α= 0.92
	The likelihood that I would eat in this restaurant is high.	
	I would be willing to recommend this restaurant to my friends.	

References

Baker, J., Parasuraman, A., Grewal, D., & Voss, G. B. (2002). The influence of multiple store environment cues on perceived merchandise value and patronage intentions. *Journal of Marketing, 66*(2), 120-141.

Bitner, M. J. (1992). Servicescapes: The impact of physical surroundings on customers and employees. *Journal of Marketing*(56), 57-71.

Brocato, E. D., Voorhees, C. M., & Baker, J. (2012). Understanding the influence of cues from other customers in the service experience: A scale development and validation. *Journal of Retailing, 88*(3), 384-398.

Brucks, M. (1985). The effects of product class knowledge on information search behavior. *Journal of Consumer Research, 12*(1), 1-16.

Chang, R. C., Kivela, J., & Mak, A. H. (2010). Food preferences of Chinese tourists. *Annals of Tourism Research, 37*(4), 989-1011.

Cohen, E. (1988). Authenticity and commoditization in tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 15*(3), 371-386.

Devlin, J. F. (2011). Evaluative cues and services: the effect of consumer knowledge. *Journal of Marketing Management, 27*(13-14), 1366-1377.

Dong, P., & Siu, N. Y.-M. (2013). Servicescape elements, customer predispositions and service experience: The case of theme park visitors. *Tourism Management, 36*, 541-551.

Ebster, C., & Guist, I. (2005). The role of authenticity in ethnic theme restaurants. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research, 7*(2), 41-52.

Flynn, L. R., & Goldsmith, R. E. (1999). A short, reliable measure of subjective knowledge. *Journal of business research, 46*(1), 57-66.

Fransen, M. L., Smeesters, D., & Fennis, B. M. (2011). The role of social presence in mortality salience effects. *Journal of business research, 64*(1), 29-33.

Frisvoll, S. (2013). Conceptualising authentication of ruralness. *Annals of Tourism Research, 43*, 272-296.

Grewal, D., Baker, J., Levy, M., & Voss, G. B. (2003). The effects of wait expectations and store atmosphere evaluations on patronage intentions in service-intensive retail stores. *Journal of Retailing, 79*(4), 259-268.

Gursoy, D., & McCleary, K. W. (2004). Travelers' prior knowledge and its impact on their information search behavior. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research, 28*(1), 66-94.

Hanks, L., & Line, N. D. (2018). The restaurant social servicescape: Establishing a nomological framework. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 74*, 13-21.

Hung, K., & Petrick, J. F. (2011). The role of self-and functional congruity in cruising intentions. *Journal of Travel Research, 50*(1), 100-112.

Jang, S., Ha, A., & Silkes, C. A. (2009). Perceived attributes of Asian foods: From the perspective of the American customers. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 28*(1), 63-70.

Jang, S., Ha, J., & Park, K. (2012). Effects of ethnic authenticity: Investigating Korean restaurant customers in the US. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 31*(3), 990-1003.

Jang, S., & Kim, D. (2015). Enhancing ethnic food acceptance and reducing perceived risk: The effects of personality traits, cultural familiarity, and menu framing. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 47*, 85-95.

Jang, S., Liu, Y., & Namkung, Y. (2011). Effects of authentic atmospherics in ethnic restaurants: investigating Chinese restaurants. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 23*(5), 662-680.

Jang, S. S., & Namkung, Y. (2009). Perceived quality, emotions, and behavioral intentions: Application of an extended Mehrabian–Russell model to restaurants. *Journal of business research, 62*(4), 451-460.

Jang, Y., Ro, H., & Kim, T.-H. (2015). Social Servicescape: The Impact of Social Factors on Restaurant Image and Behavioral Intentions AU - Jang, Yeajin. *International journal of hospitality & tourism administration, 16*(3), 290-309.

Jani, D., & Han, H. (2013). Personality, social comparison, consumption emotions, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions: How do these and other factors relate in a hotel setting? *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 25*(7), 970-993.

Kelley, S. W., & Hoffman, K. D. (1997). An investigation of positive affect, prosocial behaviors and service quality. *Journal of Retailing, 73*(3), 407-427.

Kim, H., & Bonn, M. A. (2016). Authenticity: Do tourist perceptions of winery experiences affect behavioral intentions? *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 28*(4), 839-859.

Kim, J.-H., & Jang, S. (2016). Determinants of authentic experiences: An extended Gilmore and Pine model for ethnic restaurants. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 28*(10), 2247-2266.

Kim, J.-H., Youn, H., & Rao, Y. (2017). Customer responses to food-related attributes in ethnic restaurants. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 61*, 129-139.

Kim, K., & Baker, M. A. (2017). The impacts of service provider name, ethnicity, and menu information on perceived authenticity and behaviors. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly, 58*(3), 312-318.

Kirklees Council. (2018). Consus information 2011. Retrieved 8th February, 2019, from http://observatory.kirklees.gov.uk/profiles/profile?profileId=163&geoTypeId

Klerck, D., & Sweeney, J. C. (2007). The effect of knowledge types on consumer-perceived risk and adoption of genetically modified foods. *Psychology & Marketing, 24*(2), 171-193.

Liljander, V., & Mattsson, J. (2002). Impact of customer preconsumption mood on the evaluation of employee behavior in service encounters. *Psychology & Marketing, 19*(10), 837-860.

Lu, S., & Fine, G. A. (1995). The presentation of ethnic authenticity: Chinese food as a social accomplishment. *The Sociological Quarterly, 36*(3), 535-553.

Magnini, V. P., Baker, M., & Karande, K. (2013). The frontline provider's appearance: A driver of guest perceptions. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly, 54*(4), 396-405.

Magnini, V. P., Miller, T., & Kim, B. C. P. (2011). The psychological effects of foreign-language restaurant signs on potential diners. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research, 35*(1), 24-44.

Mattila, A. S., & Wirtz, J. (2001). Congruency of scent and music as a driver of in-store evaluations and behavior. *Journal of Retailing, 77*(2), 273-289.

Mattila, A. S., & Wirtz, J. (2008). The role of store environmental stimulation and social factors on impulse purchasing. *Journal of Services Marketing, 22*(7), 562-567.

Miao, L., & Mattila, A. S. (2013). The impact of other customers on customer experiences: A psychological distance perspective. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research, 37*(1), 77-99.

Mintel. (2016). Ethnic restaurants and takeaways - UK - February 2016. Retrieved 7th July, 2017, from http://academic.mintel.com

Osgood, C. E., & Tannenbaum, P. H. (1955). The principle of congruity in the prediction of attitude change. *Psychological review, 62*(1), 42-55.

Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1988). SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. *Journal of Retailing, 64*(1), 12-40.

Park, C. W., & Lessig, V. P. (1981). Familiarity and Its Impact on Consumer Decision Biases and Heuristics. *Journal of Consumer Research, 8*(2), 223-231.

Pham, M. T. (1998). Representativeness, relevance, and the use of feelings in decision making. *Journal of Consumer Research, 25*(2), 144-159.

Raajpoot, N. A. (2002). TANGSERV: A multiple item scale for measuring tangible quality in foodservice industry. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research, 5*(2), 109-127.

Roseman, M. G. (2006). Changing Times: Consumers Choice of Ethnic Foods When Eating at Restaurants. *Journal of Hospitality & Leisure Marketing, 14*(4), 5-32.

Sirgy, M. J., & Su, C. (2000). Destination image, self-congruity, and travel behavior: Toward an integrative model. *Journal of Travel Research, 38*(4), 340-352.

Söderlund, M. (2011). Other customers in the retail environment and their impact on the customer's evaluations of the retailer. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 18*(3), 174-182.

Trilling, L. (1972). *Sincerity and authenticity*. London: Oxford University Press.

TripAdvisor. (2018). Restaurants in Huddersfield. Retrieved 10th February, 2019, from https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurants-g190748-Huddersfield_West_Yorkshire_England.html

Tsai, C.-T. S., & Lu, P.-H. (2012). Authentic dining experiences in ethnic theme restaurants. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 31*(1), 304-306.

Turley, L. W., & Milliman, R. E. (2000). Atmospheric effects on shopping behavior: a review of the experimental evidence. *Journal of business research, 49*(2), 193-211.

Wang, C.-Y., & Mattila, A. S. (2015). The impact of servicescape cues on consumer prepurchase authenticity assessment and patronage intentions to ethnic restaurants. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research, 39*(3), 346-372.

Wang, C.-Y., Miao, L., & Mattila, A. S. (2015). Customer responses to intercultural communication accommodation strategies in hospitality service encounters. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 51*, 96-104.

Wang, N. (1999). Rethinking authenticity in tourism experience. *Annals of Tourism Research, 26*(2), 349-370.

Warwicker, M. (2014). How the UK fell in love with Chinese food. Retrieved 1st May, 2016, from http://www.bbc.co.uk/food/0/27164636

Weber, K., Hsu, C., & Sparks, B. (2016). Same but Different: Chinese-American and Mainland Chinese Consumers' Perceptions of and Behavior in a Service Failure Situation. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 33*(4), 471-496.

Weber, K., Sparks, B., & Hsu, C. H. C. (2016). The effects of acculturation, social distinctiveness, and social presence in a service failure situation. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 56*, 44-55.

Wu, L., Han, R., & Mattila, A. S. (2016). A double whammy effect of ethnicity and gender on consumer responses to management level service failures. *Journal of Service Management, 27*(3), 339-359.

Xie, P. F. (2003). The bamboo-beating dance in Hainan, China: Authenticity and commodification. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 11*(1), 5-16.

Youn, H., & Kim, J.-H. (2017). Effects of ingredients, names and stories about food origins on perceived authenticity and purchase intentions. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 63*, 11-21.

Zanjani, S. H. A., Diamond, W. D., & Chan, K. (2011). Does ad-context congruity help surfers and information seekers remember ads in cluttered e-magazines? *Journal of Advertising, 40*(4), 67-84.

Table 1: Participant profile

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	109	49.5
	Female	111	50.5
Age	Below 20	26	11.8
	21-30	158	71.8
	31-40	31	14.1
	41-50	3	1.4
	51-60	2	.9
Marital status	Single	155	70.5
	Married	34	15.5
	In committed relationship	30	13.6
	Divorced	1	.5
Highest education	High school	18	8.2
	Associate's degree	41	18.6
	Bachelor's	64	29.1
	Master's	87	39.5
	PhD	10	4.5

Table 2: Sample size across each experimental condition

Customers' prior knowledge	Congruity between the employees' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant	Congruity between other customers' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant	Cell size
High	Yes	No	28
		Yes	29
	No	No	26
		Yes	29
Low	Yes	No	24
		Yes	26
	No	No	26
		Yes	32

Table 3: Manipulation check

Scenarios	Employees' ethnic background	
	Chinese	**White British**
1) White British employees and White British customers	19%	81%
2) Chinese employees and White British customers	85%	15%
3) White British employees and Chinese customers	15%	85%
4) Chinese employees and Chinese customers	89%	11%

Chi-square: 108.5, df = 3, p = .000

Scenarios	Other customers' ethnic backgrounds	
	Chinese	**White British**
1) White British employees and White British customers	25%	75%
2) Chinese employees and White British customers	21%	79%
3) White British employees and Chinese customers	77%	23%
4) Chinese employees and Chinese customers	76%	24%

Chi-square: 63.3, df = 3, p = .000

Table 4: Summary of significant MANOVA results

Source	*F*	Wilks' lambda	*p*	η^2
Congruity between the employees' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant	26.194	.801	.000	.199
Customers' prior knowledge	3.513	.968	.032	.032

Table 5: Summary of significant ANOVA results

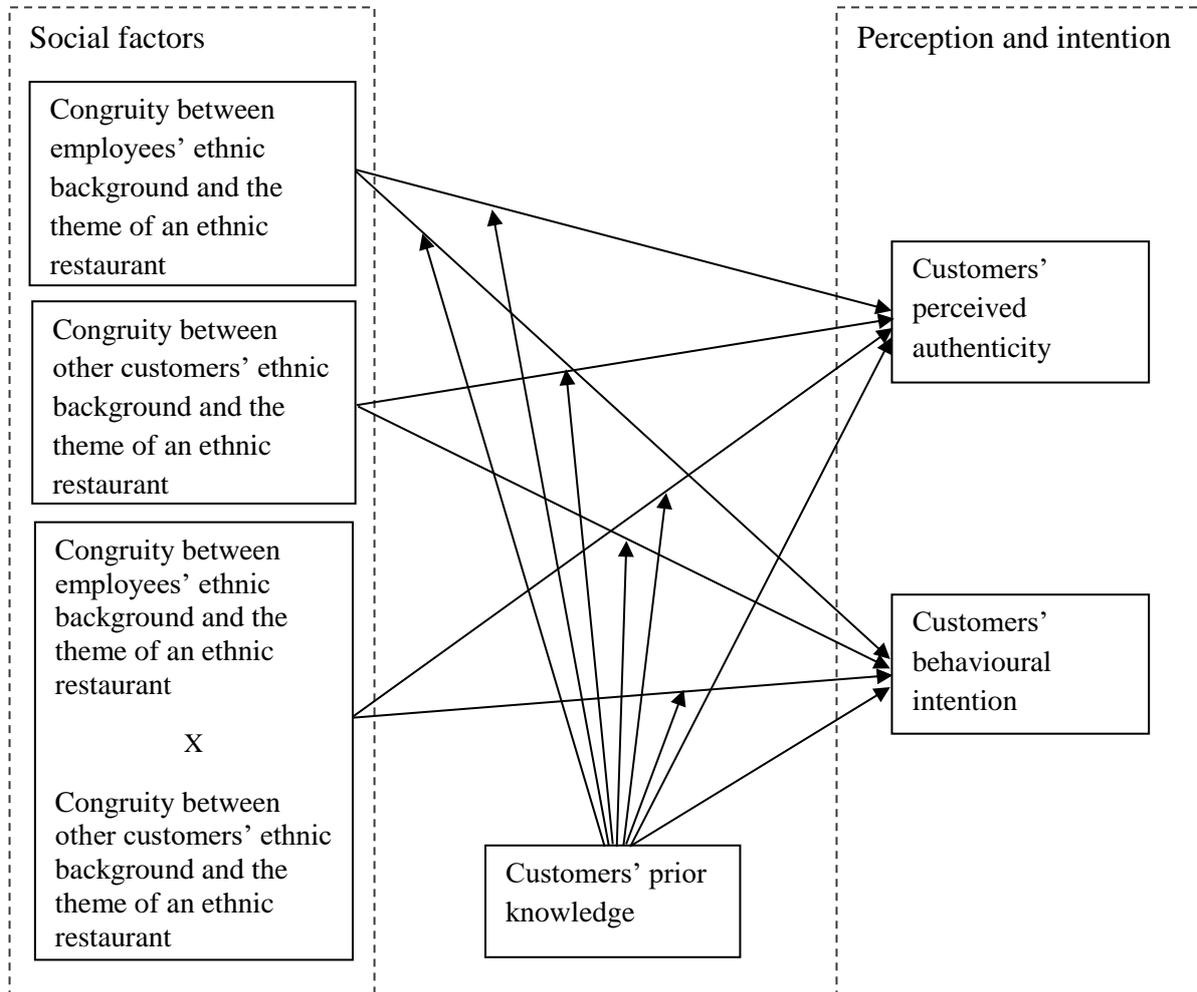| Source	Perceived authenticity			Behavioural intention		
	F	*p*	η^2	*F*	*p*	η^2
Congruity between the employees' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant	48.782	.000	.187	14.236	.000	.063
Customers' prior knowledge	6.316	.013	.029			
Congruity between the employees' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant X Congruity between other customers' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant				4.425	.037	.020

Figure 1: Conceptual model

Figure 2: Customers' behavioural intentions by 'congruity between the employees' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant' and 'congruity between other customers' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant
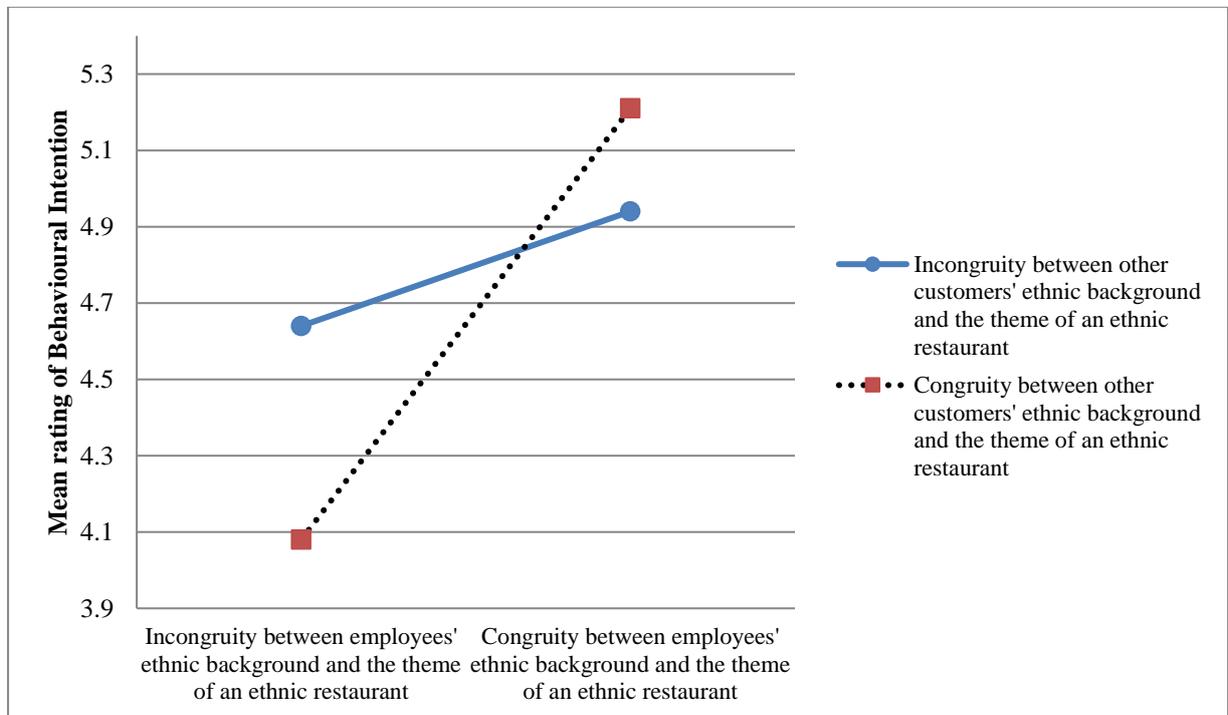
Figure 3: Customers' behavioural intentions by 'congruity between other customers' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant' and 'congruity between the employees' ethnic backgrounds and the theme of an ethnic restaurant'