

THE ATTRACTION OF THE MENU SET AT MARI MERANGKAI BUNGA SEROJA RESTAURANT IN BANDUNG

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the attractiveness of set menus at Mari Merangkai Bunga Seroja restaurant in Bandung. In this study, a quantitative descriptive method with a Likert scale was used, involving 96 respondents as samples. The questionnaire distributed to respondents focused on several aspects of set menu attractiveness, including food quality, price, theme or concept, and overall dining experience. The data obtained were analyzed using a Likert scale to describe the level of attractiveness of the set menus provided by the restaurant. The results showed that most respondents gave positive ratings to the attractiveness of the set menus at Mari Merangkai Bunga Seroja restaurant. Food quality and price were the main factors influencing the attractiveness of the set menus, with most respondents feeling satisfied with the prices offered in relation to the quality and taste of the food. Additionally, the attractive presentation and the restaurant's ambiance also contributed to a positive experience with the set menu offered. Based on these findings, Mari Merangkai Bunga Seroja restaurant is encouraged to maintain and enhance the appeal of their set menu to attract more visitors.

Keywords: attraction; menu set; restaurant

INTRODUCTION

The menu is the restaurant's main weapon in attracting customers. Menu comes from the French word Le Menu which means a list of foods served to guests in the dining room. In a household environment, a menu is defined as an arrangement of certain foods or dishes. The menu is also called Bill of Fare by the British. The menu is a guide for those who prepare food or

dishes and is even a guide for those who enjoy the dishes being made (Rotua et al, 2015). The role of the menu in a restaurant is very central. The menu can be the main attraction apart from other factors. In general, menu types can be divided into 2. Menu *À la carte* and menu set. *À la carte menu* is usually only available at restaurants or *cafés*, lower middle class. This happens because of the

practicality and freedom of guests in choosing food and drinks according to their wishes and spending power. And the opposite is true for menus set menu. Set menus are usually found in middle to upper class restaurants. This happens because visiting guests not only want to feel full, but they want to experience a new experience in enjoying a dish. However, with increasing public interest in unique and quality dining experiences, the concept of set menus has emerged in lower-middle class restaurants.

Table 1. Number of Lower Middle-Class Restaurants That Offer a Set Menu Concept *Fine Dining* in Bandung

Restaurant Name	Price
Joongla	Rp. 500,000 – 800,000
Mari Merangkai Bunga Seroja	Rp. 100,000 – 300,000
Jung Chan	Rp. 1,250,000
Abbiocco Kitchen	Rp. 1,450,000

Source: Liski et al, 2024

Of the four restaurants listed in table 1 above, Mari Merangkai Bunga Seroja Restaurant (MMBS) is a lower middle-class restaurant which can be said to be the cheapest among the others, they are present as one of the pioneers in combining the concept of *fine dining* with a wealth of traditional Sundanese culinary delights. Through the set

menu offered, MMBS seeks to introduce authentic Sundanese flavors in an elegant and modern atmosphere. Each dish on the set menu is carefully designed, using high-quality local ingredients and innovative cooking techniques. This creates a dining experience that not only pampers the taste buds but also enriches the understanding of Sundanese culinary culture. MMBS (Mari Merangkai Bunga Seroja) introduces an innovative concept where diners can enjoy a luxurious set menu without the need to be in a prestigious location or follow a formal dress code. This concept has garnered positive responses from the public, resulting in high demand with reservations filling up every day, and even a waiting list during certain weeks.

Despite the success in attracting numerous visitors, there is limited research specifically focusing on the attractiveness of the set menu offered by MMBS. Understanding the factors that make MMBS's set menus appealing to consumers, as well as how the various elements within these menus contribute to the overall culinary experience, remains unexplored. This gap in literature

highlights the need for a deeper examination of the set menu concept and its role in shaping the dining experience at MMBS.

Furthermore, while much of the existing research explores the broader aspects of culinary trends and restaurant experiences, few studies have addressed the intersection of food presentation, cultural authenticity, and the experiential factors that contribute to a restaurant's success. By focusing on MMBS, this study aims to bridge this gap by analyzing the specific appeal of the set menu concept, providing valuable insights into how these factors influence customer satisfaction and the restaurant's popularity.

Given the growing interest in unique dining concepts and their potential impact on culinary tourism, this study will offer important contributions to the literature on restaurant strategies, food culture, and consumer behavior. This research also addresses a gap in the context of culinary tourism and its integration with technological advancements in food presentation, which has been explored in other areas such as film

technology yet remains underexplored in the food service industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Set Menu

A set menu is a concept for serving food in a restaurant that offers a choice of dishes in a certain package at a fixed price. This concept is very popular in restaurants because it provides an organized dining experience for consumers, as well as making it easier to manage restaurant operations. Recently, this concept has often been used by restaurants as a strategy to simplify choices for customers and increase operational efficiency. The set menu generally consists of several choices of dishes that have been chosen by the restaurant, which can include appetizers, main dishes and desserts, or can also be called Set Menu.

There are several types of set menus frequently used by restaurants, each with different goals and audiences:

Fixed Menu Set (*Fixed Menu*)

This type of set menu offers an unchanging selection of dishes, and customers can only choose from predetermined options. This type of menu is usually applied to special

events or regular lunches and dinners at restaurants. According to Kotler et al. (2017) in *Principles of Marketing*, fixed menus provide advantages in terms of planning and cost control for restaurants.

Set Rotating Menu (À la carte Set Menu)

This set menu gives customers the freedom to choose one dish from several options available in each category, such as appetizer, main and dessert. This type of set menu is more flexible and is often used in restaurants with a varied menu. Lloyd (2014) states that this type of menu provides a balance between freedom of choice and convenience for customers.

Seasonal or Thematic Menu Sets (Seasonal/Theme Set Menu)

Restaurants often offer thematic or seasonal set menus that focus on local ingredients or signature dishes appropriate to a particular season. This can be a way to differentiate a restaurant from competitors and attract customers interested in a more exclusive culinary experience. Patterson (2015) points out that these seasonal menus can often increase customer loyalty and give a restaurant a fresh feel.

Product Attractiveness

Product appeal refers to the ability of a product to attract the attention of consumers and create interest in purchasing. In the context of a restaurant, the appeal of a product is not only determined by the taste of the food, but also the visual aspect, quality, price, and experience provided to customers. Kotler et al. (2017) in *Principles of Marketing* explains that product attractiveness is often multidimensional, involving emotional and functional aspects that influence consumer decisions in choosing a product. Products that meet consumer needs and desires, and offer more value, have stronger appeal.

Meanwhile, Schiffman and Kanuk (2010) in *Consumer Behavior* stated that the attractiveness of a product is greatly influenced by consumers' perceptions of the quality and benefits offered by the product. In the restaurant industry, this includes the quality of raw materials, the serving process, as well as how the product meets customer expectations in the dining experience.

In the restaurant industry, product appeal is not only determined by the taste of the food but also by the

experience created through elements such as service, restaurant atmosphere, and product visualization. Ryu et al. (2010) in *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research* revealed that factors such as cleanliness, service quality, and restaurant interior design have a big influence on the attractiveness of the product. A pleasant dining experience increases customers' perception of product quality and encourages them to return to the restaurant.

The set menu concept can strengthen the product's appeal, because apart from offering a combination of prepared dishes, the set menu also creates a structured dining experience. Baker et al. (2002) in their study in the *International Journal of Hospitality Management* stated that the attractiveness of products in restaurants can increase if the presentation of food arranged in a set menu looks visually attractive and appetizing. This is very important because customers not only judge food based on taste but also based on how the food is served.

Zeithaml et al. (2009) in *Services Marketing* state that consumers often make decisions based on their

perceptions of the value offered by product quality. Then Kivela et al. (1999) in *International Journal of Hospitality Management* explains that fixed-price set menus are often more affordable than à la carte options, thereby increasing their appeal to consumers with limited budgets. Competitive pricing and the perceived value by customers are the primary factors influencing the appeal of set menus in restaurants. (Kivela et al., 1999) Considering the above, set menus offering a variety of quality dishes at more affordable prices often attract customers seeking a more efficient dining experience. In the journal (Oktavia & Desafitri, 2023), it is shown that product quality and price significantly influence the decision to visit a restaurant, with affordable prices playing a crucial role in customer satisfaction. However, it remains satisfying. Additionally, Pine and Gilmore (1999) in *The Experience Economy* state that customers do not just buy products but also buy experiences. Restaurants that successfully combine aesthetic elements, friendly service, good food quality, and an attractive venue concept can enhance the appeal of their

products. Set menus offering unique and distinct culinary experiences have the potential to create a strong perception of the value of the products offered.

Based on several sources above, it can be concluded that several indicators of the attractiveness of a product in a restaurant include food quality, price, restaurant theme, and experience.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method that the author uses in this research is the Descriptive Research Method, which is a method for researching the status of a group of people, an object, a set of conditions, a system of thought, or a class of current events by creating a systematic, factual and accurate description or picture of the facts, characteristics and relationships between the phenomena being investigated with appropriate interpretation. Meanwhile, the author uses a quantitative approach, namely a research method that focuses on collecting and analyzing data in the form of numbers or quantities which can be analyzed using statistical techniques. This research aims to describe, analyze and draw conclusions

regarding the phenomenon studied based on data obtained in a measurable manner (Sugiyono, 2017).

According to the author, this quantitative research method is very suitable for answering research questions relating to relationships between variables that can be measured and calculated precisely, thereby providing results that can be scientifically justified.

The measurement scale used in this research uses an ordinal scale. According to Sugiyono (2017), "an ordinal scale is a scale that is based on rankings ordered from the highest level to the lowest level or vice versa. The ordinal scale is also said to be a scale that already has distinguishing power, but the difference between one number and another is not consistent (does not have a fixed interval)." Several data collection techniques used in this study are:

In-depth Interviews: Interviews were conducted with consumers who had enjoyed set menus at MMBS to explore their perceptions of the quality, appeal, and dining experience offered. In addition, interviews with restaurant managers or staff were also conducted to obtain information about

the concept and elements of the set menu.

Participatory Observation: The researcher will directly observe how the set menu is served at the restaurant, as well as the interaction between restaurant staff and consumers. This observation aims to understand the context and direct experience of the set menu serving process.

Questionnaires: Questionnaires will be distributed to consumers who have enjoyed the set menu at MMBS restaurants to obtain more structured data on the factors that influence the appeal of the set menu. The questionnaire will include questions about food quality, menu presentation, restaurant atmosphere, and overall customer experience. The population for the Mari Merangkai Bunga Seroja Bandung restaurant is 2.108 people, calculated using the Slovin formula, with a sample size of 95 respondents. The sampling technique used is non-probability sampling, which does not give equal opportunity to every element or member of the population to be selected as a sample. The sampling technique used is accidental sampling, which is a method of determining samples based on chance,

meaning that anyone who happens to meet the researcher can be used as a sample, provided that the person encountered is deemed suitable as a data source (Sugiyono, 2017).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The description of the respondents in this study will be described based on gender, age and profession.

Table 2. Respondent Data Based on Gender

Gender	Amount	Percentage
Man	47	49,5%
Woman	48	50,5%

In terms of gender, it can be seen between 49.5% men and 50.5% women, showing that the appeal of this restaurant is universal, and does not depend on gender because the two are almost equal.

Table 3. Respondent Data Based on Age Range

Age	Amount	Percentage
21-30 years old	40	42,1%
31-40 years old	30	31,6%
41-50 years old	15	15,8%
< 51 years	10	10,5%

From the data above, the average number of respondents who came to the restaurant came from the 21–30-year age range (42.1%), which reflects that most of those interested in

visiting the restaurant were young people because of the culinary experience and restaurant concept offered.

Table 4. Respondent Data by Profession

Profession	Amount	Percentage
Student	40	42,1%
Self-employed	25	26,3%
Employee	20	21,1%
Other	10	10,5%

In terms of profession, the majority of respondents were students (42.1%), which reflects that this restaurant is very popular among the younger generation.

Analysis Results

Research was conducted on 95 respondents who had visited MMBS. Data was obtained through distributing questionnaires, each variable will be based on the answer score range below.

Table 5. Survey Results Regarding Food Quality

Variable	Results	Percentage
Taste the food	In accordance	58,8 %
Flavor Consistency	What?	68,5 %
Food Presentation	Good	73,7 %
Quality of raw materials	In accordance	67,4%
Menu Diversity	Quite Satisfied	58,7%

From the data above, the restaurant has succeeded in providing a good culinary experience, with consistent food quality, delicious taste and attractive presentation. However, menu diversity needs to be increased again in an effort to meet the needs of various customers.

Table 6. Survey Results Regarding Prices

Variable	Results	Percentage
Price Match	In accordance	62,1 %
Competitive price	Enough	57,9 %
Value of Price	Comparable	58 %

From this data, the prices offered by restaurants are considered adequate for the quality provided.

Table 7. Survey Results Regarding Themes or Concepts

Variable	Results	Percentage
Theme Consistency	Positive	70,5 %
Theme Alignment	In accordance	69,5 %
Concept Creativity	Good	65,3 %

From the data above, the restaurant has succeeded in creating a consistent and creative concept. The theme chosen is very suitable for the type of food served, and the creativity of this concept is one of the main attractive

factors for customers. However, restaurants need to continue to innovate to maintain their uniqueness and appeal.

Table 8. Survey Results Regarding Experience

Variable	Results	Percentage
Service	Good	71,6 %
Comfort	Very comfortable	75,8 %
Atmosphere	What?	65,3 %
Overall Experience	What?	67,4 %

From the data above, the restaurant has succeeded in providing a very positive experience for customers. Friendly and professional service, supportive comfort, and a pleasant atmosphere make this restaurant the right choice for various types of events. The restaurant succeeds in providing a satisfying culinary experience.

Discussion

The appeal of set menus will be even stronger if they are linked to the theme or concept of the restaurant. Thompson and Strickland (2018) in *Strategic Management: Concepts and Cases* explain that a consistent and attractive theme can strengthen product appeal. In this case, Mari Merangkai Bunga Seroja Restaurant uses set menus as a way to introduce dishes inspired by the restaurant's theme, such

as local Indonesian cuisine. This restaurant implements a strong thematic concept or cultural identity, often attracting customers seeking a more authentic culinary experience. As stated by Lee, S., Fowler, D., & Yuan, J (2013) in *Restaurant Business: Marketing and Brand Management*, restaurants with a clear theme and unique elements in their product presentation can create greater appeal for both local and tourist customers.

Additionally, the quality of the food at Mari Merangkai Bunga Seroja Restaurant is a key factor that attracts customers. The restaurant offers a variety of dishes with authentic flavors and prioritizes the use of fresh ingredients. Customers frequently leave positive reviews about the taste of the food, highlighting the consistency in quality and deliciousness of the dishes. Each dish is prepared with great attention to detail, in terms of taste, texture, and aroma. This has built the restaurant's reputation as a reliable place to enjoy delicious food. The good quality of the food, consistent taste, and attractive presentation make the food quality the main attraction of this restaurant. This is in line with the statement by Zeithaml et al (2009) in

Services Marketing, consumers often make decisions based on their perception of the value offered by product quality. The prices offered with several options are quite affordable for most customers when compared to fine dining restaurants in general. This restaurant is not in the luxury restaurant category, but the prices offered are comparable to the quality of the food served.

For most customers, the price paid is commensurate with the quality provided. In line with the statement by Kivela et al. (1999), competitive pricing and the perceived value by customers are the primary factors influencing the appeal of set menus in restaurants.

Customers are satisfied with the experience they receive, including the quality of the food, service, and the restaurant's unique atmosphere. Customers feel they are getting an enjoyable culinary experience, with a relaxing atmosphere and excellent service. Pine and Gilmore (1999) in *The Experience Economy* states that customers do not just buy products but also buy experiences. This increases the likelihood of customers being

interested in returning and recommending the restaurant to others.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the food quality received positive reviews, especially in terms of taste, consistency, and quality of ingredients. This shows that the restaurant successfully serves delicious food made from high-quality ingredients. In addition, the presentation of the food also received high scores, indicating that the restaurant maintains the aesthetics of presentation as part of the dining experience. The variety of the menu was also considered an important aspect, although some respondents felt that it could be more diverse. In terms of price, most respondents felt that the prices were in line with the quality of the food. This shows that the restaurant has successfully achieved a balance between quality and price, providing good value for customers. In addition, the prices are quite competitive compared to other competitors, making them attractive in terms of retaining customers.

Mari Merangkai Bunga Seroja Restaurant received high scores for consistency in terms of the theme and

harmony between the theme and the type of food. The unique and distinctive concept adds to the appeal of customers. This shows that the restaurant effectively utilizes its thematic concept to create a unique dining experience compared to other restaurants in Bandung. The overall experience reported by respondents indicates that Mari Merangkai Bunga Seroja Restaurant offers excellent customer service, with high scores for speed, friendliness, and professionalism. Additionally, the comfort of the venue and the restaurant's atmosphere received positive feedback, reflecting that the restaurant creates a comfortable and enjoyable environment for visitors. Furthermore, many customers expressed satisfaction with their overall experience, indicating a desire to return.

Even though most respondents were satisfied with the diversity of the existing menu, some respondents still gave lower ratings. Therefore, it is recommended that restaurants continue to increase menu variety, perhaps by introducing seasonal menus or new, more diverse options.

Even though the price is considered appropriate to the quality of the food, restaurants may be able to provide even more value by carrying out certain promotions or providing special packages for loyal customers in order to increase price competitiveness without sacrificing quality.

To maintain a different appeal from competitors, restaurants can continue to innovate in terms of decoration and themes used, such as changing themes or decorations at certain times, or involving customers in choosing themes to create a more interactive experience.

Even though restaurant service and comfort have received high marks, restaurants can continue to involve customer feedback to ensure they always feel cared for and satisfied with the service provided.

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