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Marketing Communication Mix and Innovation on Customer Retention and Sustainable Competitive Advantages in Culinary Tourism Business Environment in the City of Medan

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Abstract:

This study aimed at analysing marketing communication mix and innovation towards customer retention and sustainable competitive advantage in the culinary business in the city of Medan. The type of research in this study is descriptive quantitative and the nature of the research is explanatory. This study used a random sampling method to collect data of 126 respondents. In analysing the data, the method of SEM analysis was used to determine the effect of marketing communication mix and innovation on customer retention and sustainable competitive advantage in the culinary business in the city of Medan. As a result, it was revealed that: 1) marketing communication mix has negative but significant effect on the culinary business customer retention in the city of Medan; 2) innovation has positive and significant effect on culinary business customer retention in the city of Medan; 3) marketing communication mix has positive but not significant effect on the sustainable competitive advantage in the culinary business in the city of Medan; 4) innovation has a positive and significant effect on the culinary business sustainable competitive advantage in the city of Medan; 5) customer retention has a positive and significant effect on culinary business customer retention in Medan. In this study, the results of SEM analysis discovered that marketing communication mix does not significantly affect sustainable competitive advantages, but rather continuous innovation that can improve sustainable competitive advantage. Therefore, it is suggested that in order to continue to exist, business owners of culinary business should create innovative products on foods/drinks and a few technical dimensions that help achieve sustainable competitive advantage.

Keywords: marketing communications mix; innovation; customer retention; sustainable competitive advantage; culinary tourism business environment.

JEL Classification: M1; M2; M3; Q5.

Introduction

Indonesia is a developing country where its people in majority always crave for food and have been extremely entertained by the presence of ever-growing number of culinary business. As the years advance, the function of culinary business has shifted from a place for people to loosen up while enjoying foods and drinks to a lifestyle where Indonesians spend time dining out, a place where youngsters enjoy reading books, as a place where sports maniac watch football match or movies, and a place where young generation hang out with their friends and so on. The growth of restaurants and cafe businesses in Indonesia is commonplace within a business sphere, since culinary business may potentially provide great benefits to their owners and or managers. With the existence of culinary business can be harnessed as an element of promoting regional tourism sector, especially in the city of

Medan. Culinary business is lucrative in nature and the development of the culinary diversity attracts the public to increase their knowledge and insight in this particular sphere.

Managing Culinary business is inseparable from the aspects of marketing, operation techniques, financing and human resources. In addition to those, managing Culinary business is also inseparable from innovation, inasmuch as innovation is aimed at maintaining business sustainability since the existing products are vulnerable to the changing needs and consumer preferences, technology, shorter product life cycles, as well as increased competition among culinary business owners. Innovation has become increasingly important as it not only serves as a medium to maintain the company's sustainability but also as a medium to outplay competition as the market of cafe and restaurants businesses is vast and the competition is strong. Every culinary business owner or manager shall be able to win the market by creating new innovation and providing brilliant concepts or ideas for the sustainability of his business. Innovation can also serve as one of the strategies in achieving competitive advantage. Customers generally demand innovative culinary business suited to their preferences. For culinary business managers, the success in creating innovation means that they are in advance of their competitors.

According to Drucker (2010), innovation is a specific tool of entrepreneurship, the means by which they exploit change as an opportunity for different business or different services. This can be used as a discipline in implementing new ideas, guidance to be better and practiced when deemed necessary. Culinary business owners shall need to seek the source of innovation and subsequently apply the principles of successful innovation. Innovation assessment can be performed under indicators interrelated to innovation creation, viz.: creativity power, technical changes, design changes, distribution system changes and payment administration system (Supranoto 2009). In that case, the strategy to win the competition within culinary business can be done through these innovation, so that culinary business owners would be able to make a distinction between their own businesses and other businesses.

Competition among culinary business entrepreneurs in seizing customers loyalty cannot be separated from marketing communication mix. Marketing communication mix serves as a means by which managers or companies inform, persuade and remind consumers directly or indirectly of products or services they sell (Kotler and Keller 2009). Marketing Communication Mix done by culinary business managers will somehow form separate evaluation from customer's perspectives, in which the consumer's assessment of the services either directly or indirectly, will establish an image of the culinary business services. Kotler and Keller (2009) puts forth that marketing communication mix is inclusive of advertising, sales promotion, events and experiences, public relations and publicity, direct marketing, interactive marketing, word of mouth marketing and personal selling. The effectiveness of marketing communication mix promotes saving on operating costs and increase profitability. A competitive climate requires restaurants and cafe business owners to be able to retain customers, so as to contribute to the business sustainability. Retaining customers is an important aspect since customer retention can be viewed as a reflection of customer defection, wherein the levels of retention have an effect on low defection levels (Tjiptono and Chandra 2005). In the city of Medan, particularly, a number of culinary business has been growing. However, these businesses are not equipped with standardized facilities and services. According to the data of Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), Medan Office, the development of culinary business experienced setback and quite a number of them leave the business. The following table shows the development of the number of culinary business in the city of Medan:

Table 1. Data on the Number of Culinary in the City Of Medan From 2010 To 2016

| Year | Total |
|------|-------|
| 2010 | 828 |
| 2011 | 793 |
| 2012 | 773 |
| 2013 | 753 |
| 2017 | 723 |
| 2015 | 657 |
| 2016 | 643 |

Source: BPS for Medan Office 2017 (Data processed)

The decline in the number of culinary business was greatly affected by several aspects, namely, conventional management of the business, technical arrangement as well as lack of innovation in creating something new within the culinary business and marketing communication mix as well as competitive advantage which is not properly and correctly applied.

Based on Table 1 the growth of culinary businesses is decreasing since the business is under poor management for generating much profit. As seen on Table 1 above, the closing down of culinary business in the city of Medan experienced a significant increase every year and has brought huge losses. If this continues to happen, then it might negatively affect business sustainability of other culinary business.

Banani (2013) puts forward that the era of new economy is now an era of intense competition which is known as "hypercompetition". As such, the key to success in the future is to meet the needs and desires of new consumers who tend to want things that are faster in service, cheaper in price and fulfill the quality that cater to their wants and desires. To lay the basic foundation both quantitatively and qualitatively with regards to these evolving changes in the competition requires fundamental changes in an organization. Sustainable competitive advantage should be established in accordance with company's capabilities and shall be consistently updated on a regular and continuous basis. By creating a synergistic strategy with sustainable competitive advantage, every culinary business owner is expected to surpass the tough competition and be able to achieve the company's goals. Sustainable competitive advantage includes the dimensions of durability, imitability, and the level of convenience to equal the strategy assets owned by entrepreneurs (Ferdinand 2002). If culinary business owners have sustainable competitive advantage, some criteria must be prepared in order to be able to survive in the marketplace, these include having certain uniqueness in the culinary business facilities, having unique customer service quality that is difficult to imitate, creating the power of creativity in the competition, creating innovation on an ongoing basis, able to deal with various situations in the marketplace (Hunting Dragons Consulting, 2008).

In maintaining sustainable competitive advantages, every business actor must resort to options that make it difficult for competitors to replicate or imitate. This is in line with the data on the decreased number of culinary business above-mentioned, wherein it is not expected that the existence of culinary business entrepreneurs in the city of Medan will experience bankruptcy. Therefore, culinary business activities must be coordinated effectively and planned perfectly by business owners so that all these activities can potentially lead to achieving the goals as set by the business owners. A culinary business can develop and gain respects and loves by its customers only if the restaurant and the café along with their employees keep pace with global competition, and if it is possible being a market leader in the field. Competition at local, regional and global levels will have a rapid and unpredictable changing effect. Any changes occurred in the marketplace must always be anticipated in order for culinary business to persistently exist and stay ahead of their competitors by building sustainable competitive advantages

1. Literature Review

1.1. Marketing Communication Mix

According to Kotler and Keller (2010), there are eight types of marketing communication mix, namely:

- advertising, that is all forms of paid non-personal presentations and promotion of ideas, goods or services through clear sponsorship;
- sales promotion, that is various short-term incentives to promote products or services experimentation or purchase;
- events and experiences, that is company-sponsored activities or programs designed to create daily interactions or special particular brand-related interactions;
- public relations and publicity, that is various programs designed to promote or to protect the image of the company or its individual products;
- direct marketing, that is doing marketing through mails, telephone, facsimile, emails, internet for the purpose of communicating directly with customers or inquiring response or dialogue with customers and certain prospects;
- interactive marketing, that is online activities and programs designed to engage prospective customers and prospects which either directly or indirectly raises the awareness of improving the image or creating sales of products and services;
- word of mouth marketing, that is oral, written and electronic communication between communities related to excellence or personal experience of buying or using products or services;
- personal selling, that is face-to-face interaction with one or more prospective buyers by making presentations, answering questions and making orders.

1.1.1. Innovation

Innovation is a number of new creation (be it tangible materials or intangible forms) which has significant economic value, and is generally done by a company or sometimes by an individual. Rogers (1994) defines innovation as an

idea, concepts, practices or objects that are recognized and accepted as a novelty by a person or group to adopt. In the meantime, Robbins (1994) defines innovation as a new concept applied to initiate or improve a product or process and services.

1.1.2. Customer Retention

Kaplan and Norton (2000) argue that customer retention is an activity geared towards maintaining continuous interaction with customers through ongoing relationships, marketing loyalty, marketing databases, permission marketing, and some developments. Furthermore, according to Kaplan and Norton (2000), the philosophy behind customer value concepts, among others: Past and current customer behavior is the best predictor of future customer behavior. This means that the present and the past customer behavior is a precise measurement of future customer behavior. Active customers are happy (retained) customers; and they like you "win". They like to feel they are in control and smart about the choices they make, and they like to feel good about their behavior.

Active customers are customers who feel happy when they have the chance to interact with a company, they are the ones who control behavior pattern, and this will ultimately affect their choices, and they feel satisfied. Therefore, attention towards customers is one way to control customers with the characteristics they have, such as by sending birthday greeting cards, and various other possible forms of attention. Retention marketing is all about action-reaction-feedback-repeat. Thus, retention can be done when it comes to the concept of action, and this action will generate a reaction, and based on this reaction there is an acceptable feedback on the action that a marketer has taken. Based on this ground, the repetition of the customer retention program can be decided to continue or discontinue. Retention marketing requires allocating marketing resources. You have to realize some marketing activities and customers will generate higher profits than others.

1.1.3. Sustainable Competitive Advantages

The concept of competitive advantages originated from the Porter Strategy Concept (2000) which defines it as company's ability to achieve economic benefits above the target profit set by competitors in the marketplace in the same industry. Companies with competitive advantages always have the ability to understand changes in the market structure and to choose effective marketing strategies. Porter's study then sets out generic strategies which are further classified into three categories: cost leadership, differentiation, and focus. This is what inspired Wroe Alderson (Hoffman 2000) to express that the development of the concept of sustainable competitive advantage principally lies in the specialization of a company to find variations in buyer's demand. Hall and Henderson (Hoffman 2000) revealed that when companies wish to survive, they then should have unique advantages over their competitors

2. Methodology

2.1. Types and Nature of Research

This research was conducted by applying survey method and the type of this research is descriptive quantitative, whereas the nature of this research is explanatory. (Arikunto,2002).

2.2. Population and Sample

The population in this research is all culinary business, while the unit of analysis is the owner or the entrepreneurs in the culinary business as the respondents who know and are directly involved in running the culinary business (Absah,2009). In addition to that, the study was conducted within the city of Medan until the year 2016. In determining the sample, the following method was used:

- to determine the number of samples, this study adopts Hoogland and Boomsma (Ferdinand 2002) method, in which he suggests that to take samples of the owner or the entrepreneurs of culinary business in this SEM study, we can multiply the number of available indicators by five to ten and the data that fall under high kurtosis value, the minimum sample size should be 5-10 times bigger than the number of free parameters (Indicator). The indicators in research are as much as 18, hence, the number of samples under study would be:

$$\text{Number of Sample} = \text{Indicator} \times 7$$

$$= 18 \times 7$$

$$= 126$$

From the above calculation, it was obtained that the number of samples in this study was 126.

- the samples were collected accidentally from all districts in the city of Medan totaling 21 districts with the criteria of 126 culinary business owners located in each district;
- upon obtaining the number of samples based on an SEM method and since the unit of analysis in this research is the owners or entrepreneurs of the culinary business, then in distributing the questionnaires, we conducted accidental sampling method (Sugiyono,2008), on the unit of analysis mentioned in accordance with the number of samples

3. Result

The next analysis was conducted by applying Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) in full model which was aimed at testing the model and hypothesis being developed in this research. Testing of model in Structural Equation Modelling was performed under two different tests, namely conformity test model and causality significance test through regression coefficient test. In addition to the full model figure above, the analysis should be further supported by the results of the regression weight as presented below.

Table 2. Testing Results of Model Feasibility

| Goodness of Fit Index | Cut off Value | Results | Model |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------|-------|
| Chi-Square | < 575,208 | 86,8 | Good |
| GFI | > 0,90 | 0,934 | Good |
| TLI | > 0,95 | 0,979 | Good |
| CFI | > 0,95 | 0,992 | Good |
| CMIN/DF | < 2,00 | 1,523 | Good |
| RMSEA | < 0,084 | 0,065 | Good |

Source: Research Results, 2017 (Data Processed)

The table of results above showed that in full model test, the model has been categorized into fulfilling fit or good criteria. This is because the items have met all the criteria with model feasibility test under the provisions set by cut off values. As for GFI criteria, good category is in the value of 0,934 bigger than cut off value of 0,90. The calculation results of chi-square test on full model obtained chi-square value of 86.8 under chi-square for degrees of freedom (df) of 320 at 5% significant level of 575,208. The value of CMIN/DF is 1.523 under cut off value of 2.00. TLI value of 0.979 is above cut off value of 0.95. CFI value of 0.992 is above cut off value of 0.95 and RMSEA value of 0.065 with cut off value of below 0.084. The results showed that the overall model meets the fit model criteria, which therefore fulfilled the model's feasibility in answering research hypothesis. The observed criteria (indicator) of each variable is considered valid if it has a loading value of above 0.5, thus leaving no observed criteria (indicator) dropped (discarded). The results of the study for observed criteria (indicators) can be seen in the Table 3.

Based on the above figure and table it was observed that each latent variable which formed the indicators showing the results meet the criteria of CR value of above 1.96 with P smaller than 0.05 and lambda value or factor loading of greater than 0.5. The results also showed that the latent variable forming the indicators significantly indicates the latent factors formed. Hence, the model used in this study is considered acceptable.

Table 3. Results of Regression Weights on Structural Equation Modeling Analysis

| | | | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Label |
|-----|------|-----------------------------------|----------|------|--------|------|-------|
| X11 | <--- | Marketing Communication Mix | 1.000 | | | | |
| X12 | <--- | Marketing Communication Mix | .986 | .076 | 12.927 | .000 | Valid |
| X21 | <--- | Innovation | 1.000 | | | | |
| X22 | <--- | Innovation | 1.018 | .032 | 31.450 | .000 | Valid |
| X23 | <--- | Innovation | 1.080 | .036 | 29.688 | .000 | Valid |
| Y11 | <--- | Customer Retention | 1.000 | | | | |
| Y12 | <--- | Customer Retention | 1.064 | .030 | 35.747 | .000 | Valid |
| Y13 | <--- | Customer Retention | 1.752 | .084 | 20.975 | .000 | Valid |
| Y21 | <--- | Sustainable Competitive Advantage | 1.000 | | | | |
| Y22 | <--- | Sustainable Competitive Advantage | .907 | .043 | 21.342 | .000 | Valid |
| X13 | <--- | Marketing Communication Mix | .642 | .061 | 10.609 | .000 | Valid |
| X14 | <--- | Marketing Communication Mix | .664 | .055 | 11.959 | .000 | Valid |
| Y14 | <--- | Customer Retention | .673 | .036 | 18.950 | .000 | Valid |

| | | | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Label |
|-----|------|-----------------------------------|----------|------|--------|------|-------|
| Y15 | <--- | Customer Retention | .826 | .106 | 7.811 | .000 | Valid |
| X24 | <--- | Innovation | .621 | .024 | 25.665 | .000 | Valid |
| Y23 | <--- | Sustainable Competitive Advantage | .869 | .049 | 17.865 | .000 | Valid |
| Y24 | <--- | Sustainable Competitive Advantage | 1.173 | .060 | 19.652 | .000 | Valid |
| X15 | <--- | Sustainable Competitive Advantage | .707 | .057 | 12.443 | .000 | Valid |

Source: Research Results 2017 (data processed)

3.1. Regression Weights Analysis

A Regression Weights analysis on an SEM was used to examine the extent of the effect on each variable tested in this study. In details, the results of hypothesis test of this study are discussed in order in accordance with the hypothesis proposed in this study.

3.1.1. The effect of marketing communication mixes on customer retention in the city of Medan

Table 4. Hypothesis Test Results

| Dependent Variable | | Independent Variable | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Remark |
|--------------------|----|-----------------------------|----------|------|--------|------|-------------|
| Customer Retention | <- | Marketing Communication Mix | -.095 | .044 | -2.188 | .029 | Significant |

Source: Research Results 2017 (data processed)

Based on the above table of hypothesis testing results with the interpretation of each path coefficient or causal direction, the hypothesis testing obtained the following results: marketing communication mix (X1) has a significant effect on customer retention (Y1) with a positive relationship direction. This can be seen on the positive path coefficient of 0.44 with C.R. value of equal to -2.010 and it was obtained that the significance probability (p) of 0.044 smaller than the specified significance level (α) of 0.05. The results of the research indicated that marketing communication mix has a negative but significant effect on customer retention in culinary business in the city of Medan. From these results, it is discovered that the marketing communication mix implemented does not necessarily always lead to a positive or good effect on customer retention, since the more intense the marketing communication mix is implemented, the more effect it has on the lower customer retention rate over time. It is therefore concluded that the implementation of marketing communication mix inclined towards retaining customers does not necessarily bring a positive effect on achieving organizational goals performed by entrepreneurs.

3.1.2. The effect of innovation on customer retention in the culinary business in the city of Medan

Based on Table 5 below of the results of hypothesis testing with interpretation of each path coefficient or causal relationship, hypothesis testing obtained the following results: innovation (X2) has insignificant effect on customer retention (Y1) with a positive relationship direction

Table 5. Results of Hypothesis Test

| Dependent Variable | | Independent Variable | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Remark |
|--------------------|----|----------------------|----------|------|--------|------|---------------|
| Customer Retention | <- | Innovation | .611 | .037 | 16.375 | .000 | Insignificant |

Source: Research Results 2017 (processed data)

. The positive path coefficient is 0.37 with the value of C.R. of as much as 16.375 and it was obtained that the significance probability (p) is 0.000 which is smaller than the specified significance level (α) of 0.05. The research results showed that innovation has positive and insignificant effect on culinary business customer retention in the city of Medan. From these results, it was discovered that every innovation created has insignificant and meager effect on customer retention.

3.1.3. The effect of marketing communication mixes on sustainable competitive advantage in the culinary business in the city of Medan

Table 6. Results of Hypothesis Testing

| Dependent Variable | | Independent Variable | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Remark |
|-----------------------------------|----|-----------------------------|----------|------|-------|------|---------------|
| Sustainable Competitive Advantage | <- | Marketing Communication Mix | .092 | .069 | 1.329 | .184 | Insignificant |

Source: Research Results 2017 (Data processed)

Based on table of hypothesis testing results above with the interpretation of each path coefficient or causal direction, the hypothesis testing obtained the following results: Marketing Communication Mix (X1) has no significant effect on Sustainable Competitive Advantage (Y) with positive relationship direction. It can be seen from the positive coefficient path of 0.69 where the value of C.R. of equal to 1.329 and it was obtained that the significance probability (p) is 0.184 which is greater than the specified significance level (α) of 0.05. Based on the research results, it was revealed that Marketing Communication Mix has positive but insignificant effect on sustainable competitive advantage at culinary business in the city of Medan. From these results, it was discovered that every Marketing Communication Mix implemented has insignificant and meager effect on sustainable competitive advantage on sustainable competitive advantage.

3.1.4. The effect of innovation on sustainable competitive advantage in the culinary business in the city of Medan

Table 7. Results of Hypothesis Testing

| Dependent Variable | | Independent Variable | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Remark |
|-----------------------------------|----|----------------------|----------|------|-------|------|-------------|
| Sustainable Competitive Advantage | <- | Innovation | 346 | .122 | 2.825 | .005 | Significant |

Source: Research Results 2017 (Data processed)

Positive path coefficient is 0.122 with C.R. value of 2,825 and it was obtained that the significance probability (p) of 0.005 is smaller the specified significance level (α) of 0.05. Based on the research results, it was discovered that innovation has a positive and significant effect on Sustainable Competitive Advantage in the Restaurant and Café business in the city of Medan. From these results, it is revealed that innovation is a concept that can be used as a means to measure sustainable competitive advantages in making the goals, strategies and effects of the business turn out positive.

3.1.5. The effect of customer retention on sustainable competitive advantage in the culinary business in the city of Medan

Table 8. Results of Hypothesis Testing

| Dependent Variable | | Independent Variable | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Remark |
|-----------------------------------|----|----------------------|----------|------|-------|------|-------------|
| Sustainable Competitive Advantage | <- | customer retention | .430 | .183 | 2.346 | .019 | Significant |

Source: Research Results 2017 (data processed)

In the table of hypothesis testing results with interpretation of each path coefficient or causal relationship, hypothesis testing obtained the following results: customer retention (Z) has a significant effect on sustainable competitive advantage (Y) with a positive relationship direction. It can be seen from the positive path coefficient of 0.183 with the C.R. value of 2,346 and it was obtained that probability significance (p) of 0,019 smaller than the specified significance (α) level of 0,05. Based on the research results, it was revealed that customer retention has a positive and significant effect on sustainable competitive advantages in the culinary business in the city of Medan. From these results, it was discovered that customer retention is used as a means to measure sustainable competitive advantage and if customer retention strategies are consistently applied, sustainable competitive advantage can be maintained. Next, the results of each hypothesis test above will be presented in brief in Table 9 below wherein the hypothesis is concluded.

Table 9. Hypothesis Conclusions

| Hypothesis | CR and P Values | Test Results |
|--|--------------------------|--|
| The effect of marketing communication mix on sustainable competitive advantage | CR = 1.329 P = 0.184 | Positive but insignificant leading the hypothesis to be accepted |
| The effect of marketing communication mix on customer retention | CR = -2.188 P = 0.029 | Negative and Significant leading the hypothesis to be unaccepted |
| The effect of innovation on customer retention | CR = 16.375 P = 0.000 | Positive and Significant leading the hypothesis to be accepted |
| The effect of innovation on sustainable competitive advantage | CR = 2.825 P = 0.005 | Positive and Significant leading the hypothesis to be accepted |
| The effect of customer retention on competitive advantage | CR = 2.346 P = 0.019 | Positive and Significant leading the hypothesis to be accepted |

Source: Research Results 2017 (processed data)

4. Discussion

4.1. The effect of marketing communication mix on sustainable competitive advantages

The results showed that Marketing Communication Mix has a positive but insignificant effect on sustainable competitive advantage in culinary business in the city of Medan. It was discovered that every culinary business entrepreneurs who implement marketing communication mix in the city of Medan claimed that creating sustainable competitive advantage is unimportant. This is proven by the analysis results in which every marketing communication mix implemented proved to have not much effect on sustainable competitive advantages and the effect is meager with regards to performing sustainable competitive advantages. Kotler and Keller (2010) puts forth that marketing communication is a means by which the company tries to inform, lure and remind consumers directly or indirectly of the products and brands they sell. In essence, marketing communication represents the "voice" of and the brand of a company as well as a means by which companies can establish dialogue and build consumers relationships.

4.2. The effect of marketing communication mix on customer retention

The research results showed that Marketing Communication Mix has negative but significant effect on culinary business customer retention in the city of Medan. It was discovered that every culinary business that implement Marketing Communication Mix in the city of Medan has failed to make the customers loyal.

The marketing communications mix implemented does not necessarily lead to positive or good effect on customer retention, since the more intense the marketing communications mix is implemented, the more effect it has on the decreased rate of customer retention over time. It is concluded that the implementation of marketing communication mix inclined towards customer retention does not necessarily bring positive effect in achieving organizational goals performed by entrepreneurs. Since communication marketing mix has been defined as a means by which companies try to inform, persuade and remind consumers directly or indirectly of the products and the brands they sell, it can be said that marketing communication mix is not the only means in marketing services, products or goods, but rather it is the business owner's consistency towards evaluating his/her business in an attempt to keep customers loyal and keep coming back.

4.3. The effect of innovation on customer retention

The research results showed that innovation has positive and significant effect on culinary business customer retention in the city of Medan. Generally, culinary business customers in the city of Medan have always demanded the latest innovations such as the latest list of menu to updated room interiors. The effect of this innovation leads to forming customers' attitude and confidence towards the culinary business and subsequently buy the products.

Innovation on the menu up to the room interiors can be created, maintained, and improved so as to convince consumers about the benefits they obtain during the time they spend in the culinary business. Innovation as the ability to apply creative solutions to certain issues should be harnessed by entrepreneurs so that they can improve or enrich the quality of service to customers. However, in this study, innovation does not have much effect on customer retention and the effect is meager in terms of customer retention. This is proven by the results of research analysis, that with better culinary business innovation management in the city of Medan, it will result in the increased rate of culinary business customer retention in the city of Medan.

4.4. The effect of Innovation on Sustainable Competitive Advantages

The research result showed that innovation has positive and significant effect on restaurant and café sustainable competitive advantage in the city of Medan. Culinary business as culinary business destinations in Medan city are required to create new added-values and creativity which can potentially promote the creation of new innovations in the presentation of the foods/beverages menu to the room interiors. Culinary business customers in the city of Medan might directly assess the quality of food and the specialty of the culinary business.

Innovation as the ability to apply creative solutions to issues faced opens up the opportunity to improve or to enrich the quality of service to customers. Innovation is a concept that can be used as a means to measure the sustainable competitive advantage so that business goals, strategies and effects are positives. This is proven by the results of research analysis, that with the better management of continuous innovation in the culinary business in the city of Medan, it will increase sustainable competitive advantage in the culinary business in the city of Medan. Rogers (1994) defines innovation as an idea, concept, practice or object that is recognized and accepted as a novelty new by a person or group to adopt.

4.5. The effect of customer retention on Sustainable Competitive Advantages

The research results showed that customer retention has a positive and significant effect on sustainable competitive advantage in the culinary business in the city of Medan. The competition amongst culinary business in Medan city is intensely aggressive, which forces the culinary business in Medan to seek alternatives and build a management system that enables them to professionally retain their customers and subsequently give an effect on increased sustainable competitive advantages in the culinary business in the city of Medan. This is in line with the research conducted by Hadi (2011), entitled "Relationship Marketing: Its effect on customer retention (Study on Restaurants in Surabaya)" which concluded that building relationship marketing with no support of good relationships quality through providing services quality, customer values and customer satisfaction will result in customer retention.

According to Kaplan and Norton (2000), customer retention is an activity directed towards maintaining continuous interaction with customers through continuous relationships, marketing loyalty, marketing databases, permission marketing, and some development. Kaplan and Norton (2000) further stated that the philosophy of customer value concept.

Conclusions

Based on the research results and previous discussions outlined, the following conclusions are drawn:

- Marketing Communication Mix has a negative but significant effect on culinary business customer retention in the city of Medan;
- Marketing Communication Mix has positive but insignificant effect on sustainable competitive advantage in the culinary business in the city of Medan;
- Innovation has a positive and significant effect on culinary business customer retention in the city of Medan;
- Innovation has a positive and significant effect on sustainable competitive advantage in culinary business in the city of Medan;
- Customer retention has a positive and significant effect on sustainable competitive advantage in culinary business in the city of Medan.

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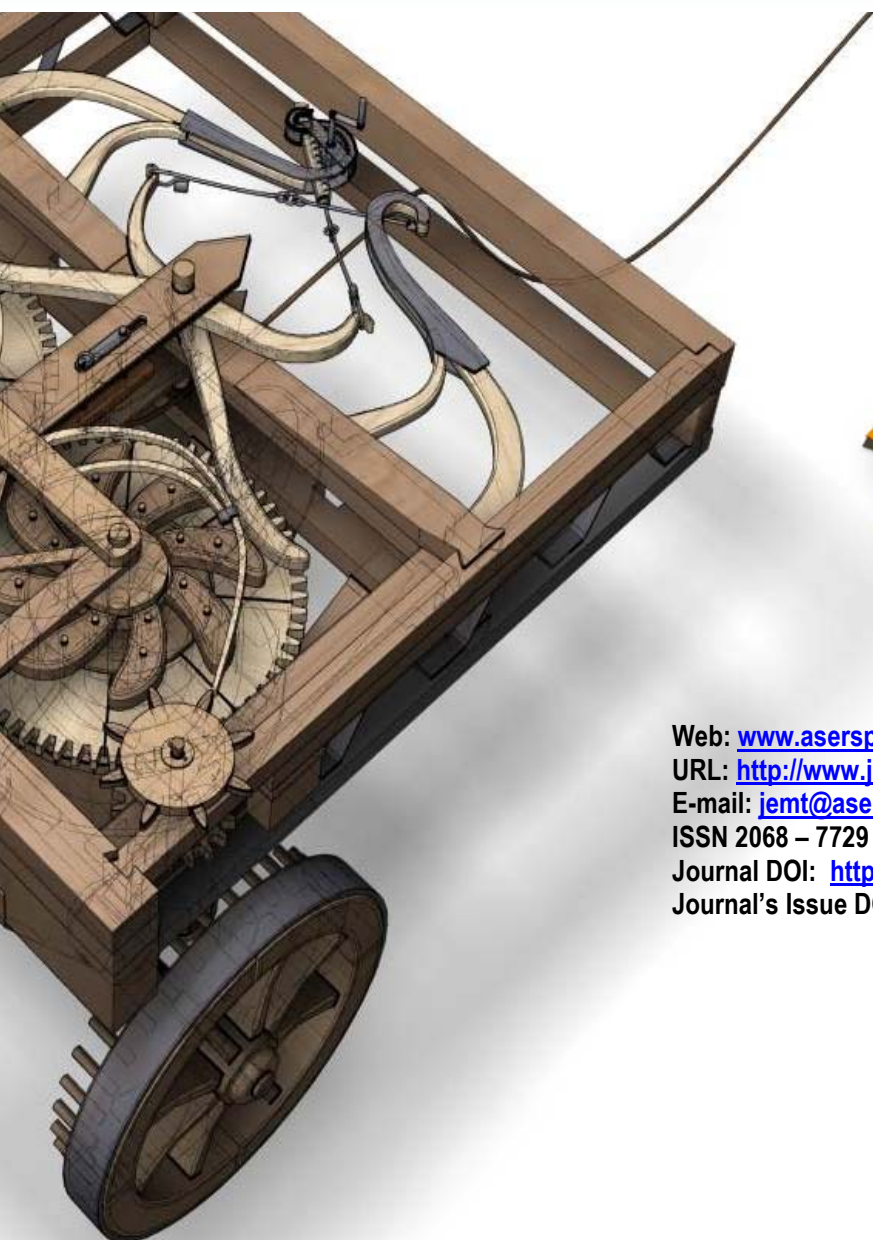
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