

Example of research proposal on mba dissertation proposal

[Business](#), [Customers](#)



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Statement of authorship

I certify that this dissertation is my own work and contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any degree or diploma in any institute, college or university. Moreover, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the dissertation.

Signed

Background

Chinese cuisine embarks a centuries-long cultural tradition of various styles and approaches originating from various regions of China and Chinese people living across the world. The origins of Chinese cuisine stretch back for thousands of years. Throughout the course of its historical evolution, Chinese cuisine have undergone various transformations and regional modifications depending on such essential factors as: imperial fashion, climate, local specifics, and diners' preferences. Over its long historical path, Chinese cuisine adopted various ingredients and techniques from foreign cuisines as a result of international trade and imperial expansion (Yau, 1994).

The acquired tastes and styles also vary by region, class, and ethnic background. Such diversity enabled Chinese cuisine to adopt a vast variety of cooking techniques, dishes, ingredients, and eating styles in what we now refer to as Chinese food. Modern Chinese are rather proud of eating a vast range of foods and at the same time sustain the traditions and spirit of

Chinese food culture, including such culinary trends of the national cuisine as: Cantonese, Anhui, Hunan, Fujian, Shandong, Jiangsu, Szechuan, and Zhejiang (Liu and Jang, 2009).

Research investigations of Chinese cuisine assume that throughout history Chinese people have paid particular attention to food, which has become a symbol of the national culture and an indispensable prerequisite of social interactions. There is a longstanding continuity of the national cuisine tradition that has undergone various changes and international interventions. Therefore, the traditional principles have remained from the earliest times, which are at the centerpiece of the lasting continuity of the national food tradition. Conventionally, Chinese meal has been made of a fan (including grains and starches) and cai (meat or vegetable dishes) (Wang and Mattila, 2008).

In essence, Chinese food is multi-faceted as it involves a diverse mix of dishes coming from different regions. There are famous Chinese cuisine trends that are rather popular outside the mainland: Malaysian, Singaporean, Indian, Indonesian, and American. Overall, Chinese cuisine is everywhere where you can meet Chinese people (Wang and Mattila, 2008).

Westerners have been always impressed about Chinese food. From the early accounts of the lives and travels of explorers and missionaries until the modern times, the range of reactions to Chinese cuisine was tremendous. People have been always impressed by the diversity of the ingredients, cooking techniques and the freshness of Chinese diet. At the same time, there is much of prejudice against the Chinese food and even the anti-Chinese legislation. There have been a lot of prejudice and abuse from the

Westerners regarding the eating patterns of the Chinese throughout the history. Throughout the history, Westerners often failed to understand let alone adapt to exotic Chinese food that included duck tongues for example (Wang and Mattila, 2008).

Today, in times of globalization and multicultural diversity, more and more Westerners are visiting China both on business and on pleasure. In Shanghai, for example, they can taste beautifully produced and sophisticated Chinese food and their impressions are overall positive. In turn, Chinese restaurants are virtually everywhere in the world especially in the locations of Chinese diasporas. Chinese fast foods and restaurants bring the Chinese culinary traditions to the Western consumers around the world (Wang and Mattila, 2008).

Western merchandisers and travellers have always been interested in cooking traditions of the Chinese cuisine. Many of these have been successfully exported and adopted in the culinary trends of other national cuisines. Despite various prejudices and stereotypes regarding the Chinese food, with the inflow of globalization processes Western travellers have familiarized with and tasted the Chinese cuisine.

For the most part, Westerners traditionally regarded Chinese cuisine as rich and colourful. They say it is diverse in colour, flavour, and taste. It therefore seems not only tasty but also artful to them. Chinese food preparation is mainly concentrated on aesthetic appearance. However, in the past many Westerners held various prejudices and stereotypes regarding Chinese food. These false perceptions disabled many of them to adequately and fully appreciate the richness of national culinary traditions in China. Over the past

decades, there were few researchers in the Western world properly examining the national origins of Chinese cuisine. Today, however, the globalization processes have positively changed the situation while most Westerners perceive Chinese food among the greatest in the world. Now people get to know that Chinese do not eat chicken and broccoli. They eat real Chinese food instead which is rather different from the meals served in places like “ Grand Dragon” for example. The authentic Chinese food is always served with chopsticks. Genuine food is served in restaurants where there are no English subtitles for the menus. These are some general features that have been spotted by the Westerners today while they share their opinions about Chinese food (Lu and Fine, 1995).

Over the past few decades, there has been a staggering influx of Chinese immigrants across the Western world. They have significantly diversified the conventional tastes of the Westerners. As a result, authentic Chinese foods have become rather popular and widely appreciated on the global food service markets. Chinese cuisine entered the U. S. when the first railroad construction workers arrived to the West Coast of the U. S. in the 19th century (Liu, Qu, and Brown, 2010). The first Cantonese Chinese restaurant was set in 1849 in San Francisco. Since then, Chinese restaurants have rapidly disseminated across the country and assimilated as an indispensable feature of the American experience (Chen and Bowen, 2001). Namely, the Cantonese style cuisine featured by sour and light sweet flavours has become the most popular Chinese cuisine among the Westerners. Over the decades, they have also readily accepted other famous trends of Chinese cuisine, including Hunan, Szechwan, and Mandarin styles. They have been

particularly acknowledged by their hot and spicy flavours (Szechwan and Hunan), as well as mildly seasoned foods (Mandarin style) (George, 2001). The 1995 survey by the National Restaurant Association has identified that Western customers valued Chinese cuisine for being rich in flavour, the price, carryout options, and being difficult to prepare at home.

Through the expansion of their food chains, Chinese bring the part of their national traditions to the Westerners. Local Chinese restaurants are decorated with authentic pictures and artefacts, including red lanterns and Chinese brush landscape paintings. All these features enable the providers of Chinese culture establish their niche on competitive western food markets and withstand rivalry from other national Asian cuisines including Thai, Korean, and Japanese.

Apparently, with the global expansion of Chinese cuisine there are experiences that are more positive and less stereotypical views on the essence of this culinary tradition among the Westerners.

While facing the tremendous competitive challenges from other national cuisines, the Chinese restaurants are combining authentic traditions with the modern trends suiting diverse tastes of the Western consumers. Local Chinese restaurants in the Western world therefore mainly serve meat with vegetables and rice as side dishes. At that, over the last decades authentic Chinese preparation has been focused on rice, vegetables, noodles, with meats and also seafood considered as the best source of protein. The dishes are laid together rather than on the side. Preparation techniques are based on traditional Chinese methods, including braising, stewing, steaming, baking, and boiling.

In 1998 Qu determined five core factors affecting the return intention of the Western customers in the Chinese restaurants, including: (1) food and environment; (2) price and value; (3) service and courtesy; (4) advertisement and promotion; and finally (5) location. Further on, Chen and Bowen (2001) summarized ten factors in Chinese chain restaurants that have made them popular in the US. These are as follows:

1. A good concept;
2. Food preparation and cooking processes;
3. Cost Control;
4. Consistency of food quality;
5. Training programs;
6. Marketing;
7. Western management and Eastern expertise;
8. Brand name awareness;
9. Customer satisfaction; and
10. Location.

According to Liu and Jang (2009), a casual-dining Chinese restaurants are featured by: (1) food-related attributes (menu, taste, variety, food presentation and safety); (2) service-related attributes (friendliness, consistency, and helpfulness of employees); and (3) atmosphere-related attributes (cleanliness, aroma, decorations, design). As well as these, today's Chinese restaurant pay particular attention to other essential attributes including price and authenticity that largely determine the satisfaction of Chinese restaurant customers.

Purpose of the study

The study aims to show the contemporary perceptions of Chinese food and Chinese restaurants in the Western world. Switzerland has been deliberately chosen as a relevant destination featured by a vast amount of Chinese restaurants. The research findings indicate the current positioning of Chinese restaurants in Switzerland and offer relevant recommendations on further improvements.

In addition to the focus of the study, the paper reveals Chinese culinary traditions and peculiarities of cooking techniques as well as their perceptions by the Western diners. In particular, the questionnaire was arranged to study modern tastes of Swiss consumers of Chinese food.

Rationale

The contemporary culinary patterns are rather diverse and capable to suit the tastes of the most meticulous diners. Chinese culinary tradition is centuries long and its historical origins serve as a proper background to transforming Chinese food into the world's most famous cuisines.

Reason 1

The exploration of the Westerners' attitudes towards Chinese cuisine and its shifts in the Western world over the past decades, as well as particular customer preferences in Switzerland, and the marketing positioning of Chinese restaurants in Switzerland are all rather important to understand the uniqueness of Chinese culinary tradition and its global assimilation with other culinary trends.

Reason 2

The research is of critical importance for further studying and investigating of the trends of Chinese culinary tradition expansion throughout the world.

Research questions

1. What were the Westerners' culinary tastes and attitudes towards Chinese cuisine decades ago?
2. How to position Chinese Cuisine in a fine dining level in Switzerland?
3. What were the changes of Chinese Cuisine over the last ten years in the Western world?
4. What are customers' preferences in Switzerland?
5. What is Chinese restaurants' positioning in Switzerland?

Proposed methodology

- The analysis provides the intended methodology applied to attain the research objectives. In the course of literature review, the most appropriate sources were referred to provide a full-fledged outline of the discussed issues covered by the research. The literature review findings were transformed into in-depth structured qualitative questions based on combination of interview questionnaire.

In this research, we have specifically applied a questionnaire to investigate the preferences of Swiss customers regarding Chinese restaurants. The survey was conducted among 30 up males and females and based on 3 questions. What are your specific preferences of the Chinese food? What improvements would you suggest to advance the overall quality in Chinese restaurants? What innovations can contribute to the diversified positioning of

Chinese restaurants in Switzerland?

The principal objectives of due research have been met based on secondary and primary data analysis. At that, the examination of secondary data assumed sound theoretical approaches towards the analysis of the essence and positioning of the Chinese restaurants and the perceptions of Chinese food among the Westerners.

Data collection method

Qualitative research is scientifically applied as a method to inquire information in the social sciences as well as market research. Qualitative research method is vastly applied by the researchers to develop an in-depth comprehension of human behaviour as well as the main causes of various types of behaviourism. The qualitative method is used to explore why and how decisions are made. Thus, the method widely investigates specific issues and samples of important problems. Qualitative methods are applied to provide specific conclusions (hypotheses) on particular cases. Finally, quantitative methods of research are applied to designate the relevance of the produced hypotheses.

Action plan

- Literature Review Completed (Date)
- Collecting Data Completed (Date)
- Analyzing Data Completed (Date)
- First Complete Draft to Front-Line Tutor (Date)
- Revisions Completed (Date)
- Final Submission Deadline (Date)

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