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ABSTRACT

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Factors that influenced the decisions of customers to dine
at selected restaurants in Bangkok, Thailand

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Although the restaurant industry was one of the biggest businesses in Bangkok-Thailand, there was only a small number of research studies that had been conducted in order to determine customer wants and needs. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to identify the determinant factors that influenced the decisions of customers who dined out at selected family restaurants in Bangkok-Thailand. The sample population of this study included customers of three selected restaurants in Bangkok, Thailand. The total number of the sample was 150 with almost an equal number of male and female respondents. There were 50 people in each restaurant. The data was collected

through the use of surveys from December 2002 to January 2003. Permission had been obtained from the three restaurant owners prior to the survey. A questionnaire using a 5-point Likert Scale and some open-ended questions was administered to customers who volunteered to participate in the study.

Factors of customer importance when dining out were: (1) Hygiene and cleanliness, (2) Quality of the food, (3) Taste of the food, (4) Freshness of the ingredients, (5) Value for the money, (6) Price, (7) Service, and (8) Atmosphere of the restaurants. The results of this research study generally concurred with the National Restaurant Association's research about consumer expectations with regard to dining at family restaurant (1983).

In conclusion, recommendations included: the restaurant owners should view hygiene and cleanliness as their major concerns. They should keep their dining area, kitchen area, and restroom area clean. The quality of the food, including the taste of the food and freshness of the ingredients, should be maintained at the highest standard. In addition, price of the food should be reasonable and discounts may be used in order to promote the restaurants to a new customer market while also encouraging the loyalty of current customers. Restaurant operators should also train their staff for the most efficient service as well as being friendly and attentive. Furthermore,

the restaurants should provide a warm, relaxing, and welcoming atmosphere. The restaurant owners should consider consulting with professional interior designers for the right decoration. Moreover, the restaurant operators should also continuously conduct surveys to determine the needs and expectations of their customers.