

Factors That Influencing Customer's Satisfaction Toward Food Trucks in Kota Bharu, Kelantan

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ABSTRACT

This empirical study investigates the relationship between customer satisfaction and critical factors such as food quality, service quality, and price and value within the food truck industry in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. The emergence of a new food truck in Malaysia in 2014, offering menu items from restaurants at a lower and more affordable price, gained significant attention and popularity among the public. This research examines the drivers of customer satisfaction in this context. A quantitative research approach was employed, utilizing an online questionnaire to collect data from a sample of 384 respondents. The collected data was then analyzed using SPSS software. The study's findings revealed that customer satisfaction is influenced by three key factors: service quality, food quality, and the price and value of the food trucks offer. This research contributes to existing theory and practice by providing a comprehensive understanding of the factors that impact customer satisfaction regarding service quality, food quality, and price and value within the food truck industry in Kota Bharu, Kelantan.

Keywords: Customer Satisfaction, Food Quality, Service Quality, Price and Value, Food Truck

INTRODUCTION

This study examines the phenomenon of customer satisfaction within the context of food trucks. By the end of 2016, the number of food trucks in Malaysia had reached approximately 500, encompassing both government-affiliated agencies and independent operators (Ishak, 2016). Food Trucks (2014) defines the food truck business model as a mobile operation that moves from one location to another, preparing and selling meals from a specially equipped van. The growth of the food truck sector can be attributed, in part, to consumer demand for diverse food options at affordable prices (Yoon & Chung, 2018). Notably, Ibrahim (2011) asserts that food trucks offer advantages such as reduced hassle and costs compared to traditional dining establishments, as customers no longer need to worry about reservations or parking.

The advent of a new food truck in Malaysia in 2014, featuring menu items from established restaurants at lower prices (Durai, 2016), has significantly contributed to the rise in popularity of contemporary food trucks among customers in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. Consequently, this popularity has generated various effects and elicited feedback regarding customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction, defined as the extent to which a product or service meets and exceeds customers' expectations (Homburg & Stock, 2004), is a crucial factor in assessing the performance of food trucks in meeting customer needs and preferences.

In this empirical paper, the researchers aim to explore and analyze the factors

influencing customer satisfaction within the food truck industry, focusing specifically on the context of Kota Bharu, Kelantan. By gaining insights into customer perceptions of food quality, service quality, and pricing and value, the researchers seek to enhance understanding of the

drivers of customer satisfaction and contribute to the existing body of knowledge in this area. The specific objectives for this study as listed below:

1. To identify the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction towards the food trucks in Kota Bharu, Kelantan.
2. To examine the relationship between food quality and customer satisfaction towards the food trucks in Kota Bharu, Kelantan.
3. To identify the relationship between price and value and customer satisfaction towards the food trucks in Kota Bharu, Kelantan.

Significance of the Study

This study holds significant value for various stakeholders involved in the food truck industry. Firstly, it serves as a valuable resource for academic researchers seeking a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies of the food truck industry. This study offers a detailed overview of the sector by compiling and presenting available data, enabling researchers to delve into food truck-related research with greater insight.

For the food truck industry, this study's findings hold multiple benefits. Firstly, it sheds light on five key advantages the industry offers food truck entrepreneurs and consumers. By identifying these benefits, the study provides entrepreneurs with valuable insights to establish, develop, and sustain customer satisfaction. Additionally, the research findings can assist entrepreneurs and stakeholders in formulating effective marketing strategies that cater to the evolving needs of consumers.

From the consumer's perspective, this study is crucial in enhancing consumer understanding of the food truck industry. It is a guiding resource for prospective consumers, enabling them to make informed decisions and judgments when engaging with the food and beverage sector. Particularly for consumers in Kota Bharu, the study provides accurate and relevant data about food trucks, thus enabling them to assess and select options that align with their preferences.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the body of knowledge regarding the food truck industry and its impact on entrepreneurs, consumers, and researchers. By exploring the factors influencing consumer satisfaction within the food truck sector, the research provides valuable insights for entrepreneurs and assists consumers in making informed choices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Food Quality

Food quality is a multifaceted aspect subject to individual preferences, evolving consumer demands, regulatory requirements, and advancements in quantitative measurement (Margherita, 2010). It encompasses various attributes or characteristics of a product that significantly influence its appeal to consumers. Seladorai and Zainol (2016) assert that internal and external factors influence food quality. External factors encompass size, color, texture, and flavor, whereas internal factors predominantly pertain to nutrition, chemical composition, and physical attributes.

Radzuan (2020) identifies these factors as the most influential in consumers' food selection and quality evaluation. Additionally, Ibrahim and Mustapha (2018) emphasize the importance of cleanliness, price, and value as essential determinants of food quality. Consequently, prioritizing quality becomes imperative to enhance customer satisfaction. Previous studies have explored numerous attributes associated with food quality, including flavor, healthiness, freshness, presentation, ingredient quality, safety, portion control, halal compliance, nutritional

value, menu variety, aroma, temperature, the introduction of new menu items, hygiene, authenticity, and texture (Zainol & Seladorai, 2016).

In summary, the concept of food quality encompasses a range of characteristics that influence consumers' perceptions and evaluations of food products. It requires consideration of external factors such as appearance and taste and internal factors such as nutritional content. Other essential elements, including cleanliness, price, and value, contribute significantly to overall food quality. Previous research has examined various attributes associated with food quality, revealing the multifaceted nature of this concept in the eyes of consumers.

Service Quality

The alignment between customer expectations and perceived performance influences client satisfaction. In the context of food trucks, service quality plays a crucial role in shaping customer reactions and overall satisfaction. It involves the processes of packaging, product creation, and the mechanisms employed in selling food items. Service quality refers to the ability of a business to meet the high standards set by its customers. Effective management and continuous improvement of service quality led to increased profitability and ensure customer happiness (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021).

Previous studies have highlighted the priority given by customers to the level of service provided by food truck vendors, as opposed to solely evaluating the visual presentation of the meal. The emphasis on high-quality service has become increasingly significant as it is vital in attracting new customers and retaining existing ones, resulting in profitability. It is through addressing customers' unique needs that food truck services can foster customer loyalty and enhance their overall experience.

In summary, customer satisfaction within the food truck industry depends on the congruence between customer expectations and perceived performance. Service quality, encompassing various aspects of packaging, product creation, and sales mechanisms, is pivotal in shaping customer reactions and overall satisfaction. The management and improvement of service quality contribute to business profitability and ensure customer happiness. Recognizing the importance of service quality over the mere visual appeal, food truck vendors can foster customer loyalty and drive success by addressing the specific needs of their clientele.

Price and value

Value-based pricing is a pricing approach that determines fees based on the consumer's perceived value of a product. This method prioritizes the needs and preferences of the consumer, leading businesses to set their prices based on what they believe customers should pay for a particular product (Bloomenthal, 2022). In the context of food service providers in cafeterias, students often seek affordable pricing due to their limited financial resources, which significantly influences their decision-making process. Nadzirah et al. (2013) similarly identified budget considerations as a crucial factor in the day-to-day operations of academic dining services, given the limited opportunities available to students. The provision of affordable pricing satisfies consumers in terms of the value they receive for their money and facilitates cost adjustments when necessary.

As defined by Kotler and Armstrong (2012), price refers to the charges associated with a product or service. It represents the total amount exchanged for the benefits derived from using or consuming the product or service. Ensuring an adequate pricing policy increases customer satisfaction and facilitates the flexibility to adjust costs as needed. In summary, value-based pricing considers consumers' perceived value of a product or service when determining fees. Students' limited financial resources drive their preference for affordable pricing in the context of cafeteria food service providers. This consideration significantly influences their decision-making process. By offering affordable prices, businesses can satisfy consumers in terms of the perceived value they receive, and it also allows for greater flexibility in cost adjustments. Price, as a concept, represents the total amount exchanged for the benefits derived from a product or service.

Customer Satisfaction

Client satisfaction evaluates whether a product or service meets or exceeds a customer's expectations (Homburg & Stock, 2004). In order to achieve the potential for customer satisfaction, service providers must deliver outstanding service quality, as emphasized by Rahim et al. (2015). Customer satisfaction plays a crucial role in the success of businesses, enabling them to maintain a competitive advantage in the market. It also significantly impacts repeat business, word-of-mouth advertising, and purchasing intentions (Zhang et al., 2013). Previous research has consistently highlighted the importance of high-quality products and services in satisfying customers (Padma & Austuti, 2016). Consequently, when consumers derive satisfaction from products and services, and a company's performance aligns with their expectations, both parties' benefit (Santouridis & Trivellas, 2010).

Hypothesis

The research hypothesis of this study focuses on the factors that contribute to customer satisfaction in the context of food trucks in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. Specifically, the hypothesis looks at how customer satisfaction is affected by the quality of the food, the quality of the service, the quality of the physical environment, and the pricing and value. In light of the research objectives, the formulated hypothesis is as follows:

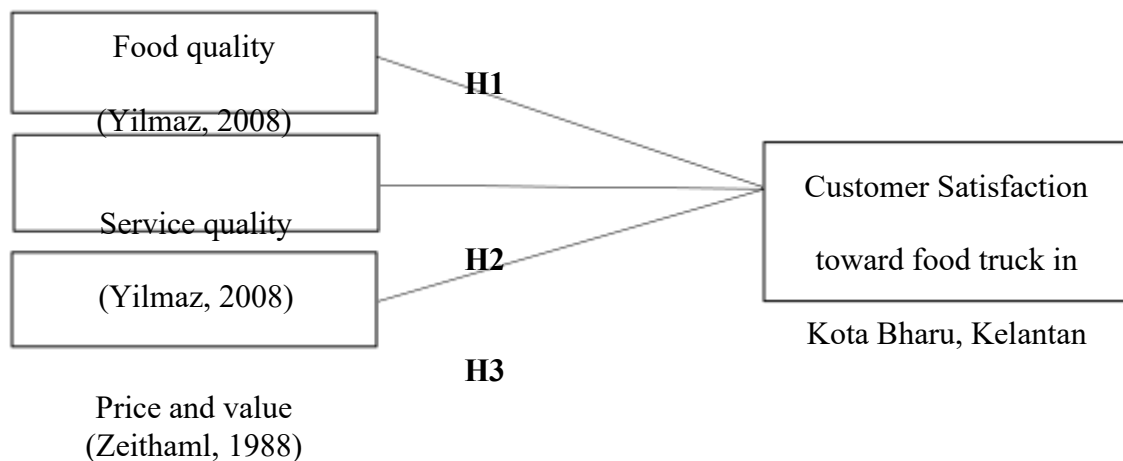
H1: There is a relationship between food quality and customer satisfaction toward food trucks in Kota Bharu, Kelantan.

H2: There is a relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction toward food trucks in Kota Bharu, Kelantan.

H3: There is a relationship between pricing and value and the customer satisfaction toward food trucks in Kota Bharu, Kelantan.

Conceptual Framework

A research framework has been developed to identify the relationship between the food quality and service quality, price, and value with customer satisfactions toward food trucks in Kota Bharu, Kelantan.



METHODOLOGY

Research Design

To effectively meet the research objectives, this study used a quantitative research technique that focuses on gathering precise and quantifiable data. A questionnaire approach was used as part of the study procedure to gather primary data. A preset series of questions intended to collect information from respondents made up the questionnaire, which was used as a research instrument. Respondents could choose between agreeing or disagreeing with statements pertaining to the survey's study goals using a Likert scale with five response possibilities. The researchers wanted to learn more about the dynamics of the food truck market, therefore they investigated the correlations between these factors.

Data Collection

The researchers focused on collecting primary data for this empirical study. Primary data refers to original and firsthand information gathered by the investigator to meet the research requirements. The data was sourced from authentic and reliable sources, including the study participants' and the researchers' perspectives. In order to collect the necessary data, The researchers employed survey and questionnaire methods. Specifically, this project used a Google Form as the data collection tool. The Google Form link was disseminated through various online platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook to ensure a broad range of respondents. Additionally, the questionnaire was posted on survey websites to attract a broader range of participants.

Sampling

A non-probability sampling method was employed for the empirical study on consumer satisfaction with food trucks in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. Specifically, convenience sampling was emphasized as the chosen approach for data collection. Convenience sampling is selected for its efficiency and simplicity, offering various options for participant selection (Etikan, 2016). The study focuses on customers using food truck services to purchase meals in Kota Bharu, Kelantan, making convenience sampling an appropriate sampling technique.

Data Analysis

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0 was used to analyze the data acquired from the Google Form. Descriptive statistics including mean, median, mode, and frequencies were used to analyze the data. Using Pearson correlation analysis, the relationships between the variables in the dataset were also looked at.

FINDINGS

The demographic profile of the respondent was summarized in the Table 1 below.

Table 1: The Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Demographic/ Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	178	46.4
	Female	206	53.6
Age	< 20 years	26	6.8
	31 – 30 years	346	90.1
	31 – 40 years	2	0.5
	> 41 years	10	2.6
Income	< RM 600	299	77.9
	RM 600 – RM 1000	29	7.6
	RM 1001 – RM 2000	32	8.3
	RM 2001 – RM 3000	11	2.9
	RM 3001 – RM 4000	4	1.0
	> RM4000	9	2.3

Level of Education	SPM	25	6.5
	STPM	14	3.6
	DIPLOMA	45	11.7
	BACHELOR DEGREE	299	77.9
	POSTGRADUATE	1	0.3
Do you have any experience buying food at food truck	YES	382	99.5
	NO	2	0.5

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents in this empirical study. Most of the respondents, constituting 91% of the total, fell within the age range of 21 to 30 years. Among the respondents, 53.6% identified as female, while 46.4% identified as male. Furthermore, a significant proportion of the respondents (77.9%) reported earning less than RM600 monthly. Regarding educational attainment, 77.9% of the respondents held bachelor's degrees. Notably, only a small percentage (2%) of the respondents reported did not having any experience purchasing food from a food truck, thus was discarded from the study. Next, the descriptive analysis was presented in the Table 2.

Table 2: The Descriptive Statistics of Independent Variables and Dependent Variable.

Item	Mean score	Standard deviation
IV 1: Service Quality		
7. Knowledge and attentive food truck staff is a valuable asset for one's success.	4.31	
8. Immediate responses to customer needs are paid attention to by the entrepreneur's food truck.	4.24	
9. The employees are able and willing to give the detailed information about the menu, ingredients and method of preparation.	4.31	0.682 0.714 0.729
10. The friendly and welcoming service is essential to attract more customers.	4.22	
	4.25	0.864 0.727
IV 2: Food Quality		
2. The freshness of food truck is nice.	4.40	
3. The food presentation in the food truck is attractive.	4.25	
4. Tasty and delicious food is factor that is very important for food truck customers.	4.32	0.719 0.736
5. The freshness of ingredients and ingredients is concerns	4.45	0.707 0.706
IV 3: Price and Value		
3. The food provided must be worth the value of money paid.	4.31	
4. The cost in the food truck seems appropriate for what I get.	4.24	
5. Cheap prices for food are important even if it doesn't taste good.	4.24	0.682 0.714 0.729 0.864 0.729
6. Menu in food trucks must be easily readable and detailed.	4.22	
7. Possible and affordable prices enable us to meet customer's expectations and needs.	4.22	
	4.25	

Table 2 presented the mean scores and standard deviations of each variable in the study. The variable "Service Quality" obtained a mean score of 4.266. The highest mean score within this variable was attributed to knowledgeable and attentive food truck staff, regarded as a valuable asset for success. The employees' ability and willingness to provide detailed information about the menu, ingredients, and preparation methods also received a high mean

score of 4.31. As opposed to that, the item "The friendly and welcoming service is essential to attract more customers" obtained the lowest mean score of 4.22. Most respondents emphasized the importance of attitude in determining consumer acceptance of changes in food trucks. Respondents believe that creatively prepared food from food trucks saves time and provides a sense of familiarity.

The mean score for the variable "food quality" was higher at 4.355. The freshness of ingredients emerged as a significant concern among respondents when considering food truck options, with a mean score of 4.45. Conversely, the attractiveness of food presentation in food trucks obtained the lowest mean score of 4.25. When evaluating food quality, various material and immaterial product aspects, including the product itself, production environment, product-packaging system, and product market system, need to be considered (Margherita, 2010).

Lastly, the variable "Price and Value" obtained a mean score of 4.252. The highest mean score of 4.31 was associated with the perception that the food provided by food trucks must be worth the value of the money paid. As opposed to that, the lowest mean score of 4.22 was linked to the expectation that menus in food trucks should be easily readable and detailed. Value pricing, which prioritizes consumer needs, allows businesses to set prices based on what they believe customers should pay for a product (Bloomenthal, 2022). When the price is reasonable, customers are satisfied with the quality of the product and the value of their purchase. Additionally, a fair pricing strategy facilitates adjustments to prices when necessary. Customers experience satisfaction when the value-to-price ratio meets or exceeds their expectations.

The result for reliability test was summarized in the Table 3 as below.

Table 3: Reliability of statistics of the Independent Variable (IV) and Dependent Variable (DV).

Item	Number of Item	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient	Strength of Association
Service Quality	5	0.832	Very good
Food Quality	4	0.797	Good
Price and Value	5	0.832	Very Good
Customer Satisfaction	4	0.758	Good

Table 3 provides the reliability and validity of the questionnaire used in the study. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated to assess the internal consistency of the items. For the Service Quality and Price and Value items, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient yielded a value of 0.832, indicating an excellent and outstanding result. Similarly, for the item of Food Quality, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.797, and for Customer Satisfaction, it was 0.758. Both coefficients indicate a "good" level of strength of association. The different number of items in each variable should be noted, with Service Quality and Price and Value comprising five items, while Food Quality and Customer Satisfaction have four items.

Overall, the coefficients obtained for the variables demonstrate acceptable and reliable results. The high Cronbach's Alpha values suggest the questionnaire consistently measured the constructs under investigation. Consequently, the questionnaire administered to the 384 respondents can be deemed trustworthy and suitable for conducting the research. These findings indicate that respondents understood the questions and responded acceptably, confirming the questionnaire's reliability.

Pearson correlation analysis was employed to examine the statistical significance or strength of the relationship between the independent variable (IV) and dependent variable (DV). The results of the Pearson correlation analysis are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Pearson’s correlation between Service Quality, Food Quality and Price and Value on Customer Satisfaction.

		Customer Satisfaction
Service Quality	Pearson Correlation	.519**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
	N	384
Food Quality	Pearson Correlation	.584**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
	N	384
Price and Value	Pearson Correlation	.584**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
	N	384

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients for the variables under investigation. All correlation coefficients reported in the table are statistically significant at the $p < .001$ level, indicating a high confidence level in the observed relationships. The results reveal that Food Quality and Price and Value share a Pearson correlation coefficient of .584**, while Service Quality has a correlation coefficient of .519** with the other variables. These findings suggest a positive association between the variables, with moderate positive correlations observed. The positive values indicate that the other variables also tend to increase as one variable increases. The magnitude of the correlation coefficients implies a moderate strength of the relationships between the variables. Overall, the analysis highlights significant positive correlations among the variables, underscoring the interconnectedness and interdependence of Food Quality, Price and Value, and Service Quality in the study context.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the study's results, a moderate strength of the relationship was found between customer satisfaction and service quality ($r = 0.519$, $n = 384$, $p 0.001$). This finding indicates that employing food trucks, service quality and customer satisfaction have a positive and substantial link in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. When the performance of the food truck meets or exceeds customer expectations, it leads to customer satisfaction. This findings is supported the previous study by Kataria and V.Saini (2019). Furthermore, the study also found evidence supporting H2, it suggests a connection between the calibre of the cuisine and client happiness. The findings showed a moderately strong correlation between customer satisfaction and meal quality ($r = 0.584$, $n = 384$, $p 0.001$). This finding suggests that there is a significant and positive relationship between customer satisfaction and the caliber of food served by food trucks in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. This finding validated from the previous scholar research by M. Henchion et al. (2014).

Additionally, the study examined the relationship between price and value of food and customer satisfaction, as suggested by H3. The analysis revealed a similar strength of the relationship between price and value and customer satisfaction as the service quality relationship ($r = 0.519$, $n = 384$, $p < 0.001$). This result indicates that the price and value of food served by food trucks also significantly influence customer satisfaction. This finding is supported by the previous study by Shin et al. (2018). Overall, the findings support the hypotheses and demonstrate the importance of service quality, food quality, and price and value in determining customer satisfaction when using food trucks in Kota Bharu, Kelantan.

This study has certain limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the research was limited to respondents residing in Kota Bharu, Kelantan, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. Therefore, it is recommended to include participants from various locations across Malaysia rather than focusing solely on one specific region as to enhance the comprehensiveness and representativeness of future studies. This strategy would provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer satisfaction with food trucks in the country.

Secondly, data was collected through a Google Form distributed via social media platforms. While this method offers convenience and wide accessibility, it poses potential challenges regarding respondent comprehension of the survey questions. Respondents may need help navigating the lengthy questionnaire, leading to potential response biases or incomplete data. In order to mitigate these limitations, future studies could consider conducting face-to-face interviews or surveys in an actual setting. This method would allow respondents to seek clarification or ask questions in real time, ensuring a better understanding of the questionnaire and improving the quality of the collected data.

By addressing these limitations in future research, a more comprehensive and robust understanding of consumer satisfaction with food trucks can be achieved, encompassing a broader population and employing data collection methods that promote more transparent comprehension and greater respondent engagement.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study explored the factors influencing consumer satisfaction with food trucks in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. The findings revealed valuable insights into the key determinants of customer satisfaction in this context. The results demonstrated that service quality, food quality, price, and value significantly influence customer satisfaction. Specifically, factors such as knowledgeable and attentive staff, detailed information about the menu and ingredients, freshness of ingredients, and reasonable pricing were found to impact customer satisfaction positively.

The study's findings add to the body of research by offering concrete proof of the elements that influence consumer happiness in the food truck sector. The results emphasize the importance of delivering high-quality services, ensuring the freshness and presentation of food, and offering competitive pricing to meet customer expectations. These findings can guide food truck operators, policymakers, and industry stakeholders in enhancing their strategies and practices to maximize customer satisfaction and loyalty. Overall, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on customer satisfaction in the food truck industry and provides practical implications for food truck operators and policymakers to enhance the overall dining experience and meet customers' evolving expectations.

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