



**INFLUENCE OF e-SERVICE QUALITY ON CUSTOMER
SATISFACTION TOWARDS ONLINE FOOD DELIVERY
SERVICES**

BY

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**A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for
the degree of Master of Science (Marketing)**

**Kulliyyah of Economics and Management Sciences
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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to examine the influence of e-Service quality on customer satisfaction towards online food delivery services in Malaysia. This study proposes a conceptual framework based on e-SERVQUAL model examining the influence of several dimensions of e-Service quality on customer satisfaction towards online food delivery service among Malaysian customers. The dimensions studied in context of online food delivery services were website design, reliability, responsiveness, trust and personalization. Data were collected from 220 respondents in Malaysia using online questionnaires through purposive sampling method. The empirical findings of this research supported two out of five hypotheses proposed in the study. The dimensions that show positive and significant influence on customer satisfaction towards online food delivery services are website design and personalization. Website design is found to be the most influential e-Service quality dimension on customer satisfaction towards online food delivery services in Malaysia. The other three dimensions reliability, responsiveness and trust do not have a significant influence on customer satisfaction but do reflect a positive relationship with customer satisfaction towards online food delivery services in Malaysia. For marketing managers and academicians, this study provides with valuable insights on improving service quality of online food delivery services and thus creating satisfied and loyal customers in the long run.

ملخص البحث

يهدف البحث إلى دراسة مدى تأثير جودة الخدمات الإلكترونية على رضا العملاء تجاه خدمات توصيل الأغذية عبر الشبكة (الإنترنت) في ماليزيا؛ من خلال طرح إطار مفهومي مرتكز على أنموذج "سيرفكوال" الإلكتروني، وقد تناول البحث خدمات توصيل الأغذية عبر الشبكة في سياق الأبعاد الآتية: تصميم الموقع الإلكتروني، والدقة، والاستجابة، والثقة، والتخصيص حسب رغبة العميل، وجمعت البيانات من ٢٢٠ مشاركاً في ماليزيا من خلال استبانة إلكترونية، واختيرت عينة البحث باستخدام المعاينة الهادفة، ومن ثم؛ دعمت النتائج التجريبية لهذا البحث فرضيتين من بين خمس فرضيات مقترحة، فالأبعاد التي أظهرت تأثيراً إيجابياً ومهماً على رضا العملاء تجاه خدمات توصيل الأغذية عبر الشبكة؛ هي تصميم الموقع الإلكتروني وتخصيصه حسب رغبة العميل، وأثبت البحث أن تصميم الموقع الإلكتروني هو العامل الأكثر تأثيراً على رضا العميل من ناحية معيار جودة الخدمات الإلكترونية، في حين أن الأبعاد الثلاثة الأخرى؛ الدقة والاستجابة والثقة؛ لم يكن لها تأثير كبير على رضا العملاء؛ رغم العلاقة الإيجابية بينها وبينه، وعليه؛ يوفّر هذا البحث رؤى قيمة لمديري التسويق والأكاديميين حول تحسين جودة خدمات توصيل الأغذية عبر الشبكة، ومن ثم؛ إرضاء العملاء عن الخدمة وإخلاصهم لها على المدى البعيد.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Science (Marketing).

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my constant partner my husband, my beloved parents and my sister who made me who I am today, and my sweet in-laws who always supported me in achieving my dreams.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Ever since Internet has been introduced to the world, it has gradually developed into a vast platform for entrepreneurs and organizations. Today, in many developed countries, the most widely used medium for buying and selling is regarded as the use of Internet that offers round the clock availability of various options of products for customers to choose. E-commerce, which we know as a new medium of business, has eventually expanded swiftly as retailers are now offering consumers the ability to shop online anytime and anywhere across the globe.

For many businesses, ranging from small to large organizations, consumers' wide acceptance to the Internet has broadened opportunities for business owners. Besides that, the new system of making payment online has made business transactions easier for web-based services including the online food delivery services (Kedah, 2015). According to Statista 2019, "In 2017, retail e-commerce sales worldwide amounted to 2.3 trillion US dollars and e-retail revenues are projected to grow to 4.88 trillion US dollars in 2021" (Schwandt, 2019). McKinsey and Company also mentioned in their 2016 statistical data that the food delivery industry constitutes of around €83 billion across the globe which represents one percent of the total food market and four percent of food sold through restaurants and fast-food outlets (Hirschberg, 2016).

As a result, the rise of the use of creating businesses online among Malaysian consumers has also contributed to the increase of modern lifestyles and this has led to

the enhancement of urbanization (Sulastri, 2017). It has been observed that among internet users, one of the highest number of users come from Malaysia which includes around 67 percent of the total internet users' population (Spykerman, 2013). Besides, according to Euromonitor (2015), "The 100% home delivery market in Malaysia has a value of RM253 million in 2014, and is expected to continue growth at 11 percent per annum".

Moreover, statistically, the consumer food service market in Malaysia has seen a growth of about 16 per cent (16%), resulting to 20,235 units from the year 1999 to 2003 (Yusof, 2016). Inspired by the US adoption of internet for food businesses, Malaysia has also witnessed a growth in food delivery startups in the rapidly growing online food delivery industry and according to EcInsider 2017, the food delivery market size is expected to grow to annual revenue of USD \$956M by the year of 2022 (Milo, EcInsider, 2018). Among the major market entrants of online food delivery services, Foodpanda was the first delivery company to operate in Malaysia getting the first mover's advantage and along with that, other key players in the industry that joined the bandwagon were Uber Eats, Honestbee, Running Man Delivery, FoodTime, Dahmakan and the recently launched GrabFood (Kong, 2018).

Henceforth, observing this increasing population of users in online food retailing industry as well as the rapid expansion of businesses catering to online food delivery, it is important to understand how to satisfy these new customers based on the service quality of the online food businesses (Goh, 2017). Notable amount of researches in marketing have been conducted previously and studied the relationship between service quality (Price, 1993); (Mohr, 1994); (Keaveney, 1995); (Lacobucci, 1995); (Zeithaml, 1990). It is also evident that most of these researches have studied the

service processes, service representatives and service environment that play a role in creating satisfied customers in a traditional environment rather than the online landscape which is still limited in the existing literature (Jo, 2010). Hence, given the role of significance of service quality on customer satisfaction, this paper conducted a study that examined the influence of customer satisfaction in this rising online food delivery service industry in Malaysia.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to most consumers, online shopping is very convenient because it helps save their valuable time (Senauer, 1996). It has been observed that although consumers visit stores for buying their desired products, they also prefer to save their time and energy and look forward to a more convenience oriented shopping service provided by the businesses (Lieberman, 1998). So it is needless to say that listening to what customers want and satisfying them is highly significant, and as such service quality and customer satisfaction are undeniably the two main concepts for both conventional marketing theories and real life businesses in practice (Mackoy, 1996). As a result, in today's dynamic world which is highly competitive, the finest method to attain competitive advantage over the competitors in the industry is ensuring that the firm works to create satisfied customers who would want to come back by delivering superior quality service (Shemwell, 1998).

Simply stated, customer satisfaction holds immense significance for businesses to survive and maintain their sustainability as it is far more difficult to gain a new customer than retain an old satisfied customer (Naumann, 1995). As a result, it is important for business owners to satisfy their customers and at times, it becomes difficult to maintain the performance of the ongoing services (Pizam, 1994).

However, in the internet retailing industry which is comparatively new and emerging, business owners have been facing difficulty in maintaining the service quality and with number of attempts to find out the key success factors for maintaining high service quality and attaining customer satisfaction, the online food delivery service providers have not witnessed any breakthrough success. (Ramus, 2013). Like many other innovations, the online business owners have been facing challenges while operating as this practice is relatively new (Frambach, 1998). Besides, the prevalent online grocery or food delivery service businesses have been struggling to reach out to their customers due to logistical issues (Ring, 2001). Research has shown that the major challenges that these online businesses are facing mainly concern with late deliveries, less interaction with the customers, slow response, over load of orders, etc. (Scarborough, 2002). Other problems related to consumer adoption include the ease of use of the websites, security concerns and complicated methods of payment (Fowell, 2000). As a result, it has been observed that the online food delivery service industry has been the slowest in growth compared to the other service sectors in the market (Yusof, 2016).

For Malaysian context, there are also many challenges and difficulties that the online food delivery service providers are facing. For instance, the rainy season in this country can bring more trouble for food delivery services as the weather and country-specific challenges are likely to occur while operating in Malaysia. Besides, unprecedented occurrences like heavy rainfall, traffic jam or over load of orders can cause difficulty in delivering orders on time (Hirschberg, 2016). For example, Foodpanda has around 150 riders and it is very difficult for them to cope up with the increasing number of orders in a day when they're running on demand (Milo, EcInsider, 2018).

(Hence, to examine the factors that influence overall service qualities, many researchers in the past have applied customer satisfaction theories to food services (Almanza, 1994; Johns, 1996; Bitner, 1992; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Parasuraman, 1991; Zeithaml, 1993; Boulding, 1993; Ostrom & Iacobucci, 1995; Powpaka, 1996; Zeithaml & Berry, 1996). All these studies have claimed that, in food businesses like restaurants, customer satisfaction results in loyal customers and repurchase and re-visit at the stores.)

Since the business in this online service delivery industry is increasingly competitive where more new entrants are joining the race each day, the issue of customer satisfaction towards this online food delivery needs to be further investigated. As we know, the overall experience of the customer with the service firm, i.e. the service quality, results in the customers' satisfaction (Sureshchandar, 2002). However, recent studies in customer satisfaction and service quality concerning the restaurant industry and now the online food delivery service arena have remained limited (Kivela, 2009). Also, research on online grocery shopping or online food delivery services has not been adequate for managerial implications as most of the available studies have been found to be conducted in US market (Morganosky, 2011). Thus, Malaysia as a developing country coping up with the US adoption of internet for food businesses, has also witnessed a growth in food delivery startups in the rapidly growing online food delivery industry and as such needs to investigate further to study the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction regarding the online food businesses.

Therefore, to fulfill this gap, this research looks into the relationship between e-Service quality and customer satisfaction towards online food delivery industry in Malaysia.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) To examine the influence of website design on customer satisfaction towards online food delivery services.
- 2) To examine the influence of reliability on customer satisfaction towards online food delivery services.
- 3) To examine the influence of responsiveness on customer satisfaction towards online food delivery services.
- 4) To examine the influence of trust on customer satisfaction towards online food delivery services.
- 5) To examine the influence of personalization on customer satisfaction towards online food delivery services.
- 6) To identify the dimension of e-Service quality that has the most influence on customer satisfaction towards online food delivery service.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the outlined objectives of the research, the research questions that need to be addressed are as follows:

- 1) Does website design influence customer satisfaction towards online food delivery service?
- 2) Does reliability influence customer satisfaction towards online food delivery service?

- 3) Does responsiveness influence customer satisfaction towards online food delivery service?
- 4) Does trust influence customer satisfaction towards online food delivery service?
- 5) Does personalization influence customer satisfaction towards online food delivery service?
- 6) Which dimensions of e-Service quality have the most influence on customer satisfaction towards online food delivery service?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will contribute to decision-making of online food delivery service providers who want to deliver high service quality and attain customer satisfaction through their offerings. As this study aims to identify the prime factors influencing customer satisfaction in the contemporary online food delivery industry, it will help the food delivery service providers operating online to gain information and direction to attain maximum consumer satisfaction that will result in loyalty and return of customers.

(Many researchers in the past have applied customer satisfaction theories to food services (Almanza, 1994; Johns, 1996; Bitner, 1992; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Parasuraman, 1991; Zeithaml, 1993; Boulding, 1993; Ostrom & Iacobucci, 1995; Powpaka, 1996; Zeithaml & Berry, 1996). All these studies have claimed that, in food businesses like restaurants, customer satisfaction results in loyal customers and repurchase and re-visit at the stores.)

The use of internet and the operations of e-commerce businesses are on the rise around the globe and Malaysia is no different from this revolution. Now the

conventional business paradigm has shifted towards digitalization and businesses are being operated online to meet the consumer demands. So, for business owners to learn how to deliver high quality service, sufficient research needs to be done in this rapidly growing new industry so that customers of the online food delivery industry can gain satisfaction using the service of different food operators. Henceforth, this study will aim to benefit the online food delivery business owners to provide proper service to their target consumers and give them valuable insights to the service providers of the industry to gain maximum customer satisfaction.

1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS

E-Commerce: The mode of businesses that are conducted on an online platform via telecommunication networks for conducting business transactions, sharing of business information and maintaining business relationships (Zwass, 2001).

Online Food Delivery Service: A virtual platform catering food to consumers through unlimited choices of restaurants or a single restaurant delivering variety of items from their menu, by which the customers avail facilities like personalized service, quick delivery and easy communication with the salesperson (SernYeo, 2017).

SERVQUAL Model: A measurement instrument having 5-dimensions consisting of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy developed to measure service quality of an organization (Parasuraman, 1985; Zeithaml, 1988).

Customer satisfaction: The result of how a customer evaluates the performance of the service they availed from the online food delivery service firm (Kedah, 2015).

Website Design: The well-designed presentation of the firm that represents the overall online food delivery service firm's theme affecting how a customer perceives the firm's online service quality (S.Y. Chen, 2005) (C. Liao, 2006).

Reliability: The accurate representation of the product, on-time delivery and exact orders and the extent to which the site of the online food delivery service firm fulfils the expectations of the customers (Alpar, 2001).

Responsiveness: The ability of the online food delivery service firm to respond accordingly to the customer's queries and extend their helping hands to customers who face complications while availing their service by providing them with quick response and attention (Kim, 2006).

Trust: The customer's belief in the online food delivery service firm regarding the reputation of its site that represents authentic and believable information (Shin, 2015).

Personalization: The quality of the online food delivery service firm's site to customize every individual customer's preference and style of purchase by easily tailoring the site according to the customer's choice (Zeithaml, 2000).

1.7 ORGANIZATION OF STUDY

Chapter One of this dissertation presents an elaborate background of the study that is to be conducted along with an explanation of the specific online food delivery industry that is being examined. After that, it highlights the problems or gaps in the mentioned industry that the study aims to solve, by outlining the research objectives and the research questions that need to be answered. Finally, this chapter illustrates the significance of the study and several definitions of key terms relevant to the study.

Next, Chapter Two of this study depicts the past literature that were reviewed to investigate the previous researches conducted on the subject. Besides, after thorough literature review, this chapter identifies the key factors that influence service quality and result in overall customer satisfaction in the online food delivery industry. At the end, it represents the theoretical framework and the proposed model to be used derived from hypotheses taken from past literature.

Then, Chapter Three portrays the methodology that is to be adopted for the aimed research and contains the technique, sample size, research instrument and data collection and analysis procedures.

1.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has presented and discussed the background of the study that is going to be conducted. It highlighted the paradigm shift of the conventional business systems to digitalization and e-commerce. Besides, the statement of the problem was discussed, as this study will aim to address the depicted problem and try to fill in the gaps of the online food delivery industry. Furthermore, this chapter also presented the research objectives that need to be fulfilled through the study followed by the research questions that need to be addressed. Then, the significance of the study has been thoroughly discussed and finally, the definition of the key terms used in this study has been highlighted for better understanding of the readers.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Two of this study provides all the past literature that has been reviewed by the researcher to investigate the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. The previous researches that have been studied mainly highlight the important aspects of service quality and customer satisfaction towards online retailing. This chapter identifies the key variables that influence the service quality of an online food delivery service that leads to customer satisfaction and develops hypotheses and a proposed model to conduct the research intended.

As such, this study aims to study and review past literature on the relationship between e-service quality and customer satisfaction based on the online service industry and fill in the gaps of adequate study conducted on measuring different dimensions of service quality that influence customer satisfaction towards online delivery service.

2.2 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

In today's aggressively competitive world, it has become essential for marketers and business owners to satisfy their customers and has become a prime concern for them in any business (Ngo, 2015). By definition, customer satisfaction can be termed as how the customer evaluates the performance of the service or product they availed from a certain organization (Fornell, 1991). Most researchers in the field of service quality state that the result of customers' expectation is customer satisfaction (Bolton,