

**Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction in Fast Food  
Industry: Case of Kota Damansara, Selangor**

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this paper is to identify the service quality elements influencing consumer satisfaction towards the fast food industry in Kota Damansara, Selangor. This paper sets out to extend current knowledge on tangibility, assurance, empathy, reliability responsiveness towards customer satisfaction in fast food industry. This research has employ by using quantitative approach and the data was gathered from 200 respondents. Research was tests the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in fast food industry. The questionnaire has been used to collect the information for respondents, and for measurement, quantify the respondent's response with the help of five points Likert scale. Ranging from 1 = strongly disagreed, 5 = strongly agreed was used. Data collected was analyzed using mean and linear regression on the service quality and customer satisfaction in fast food industry. Findings indicate that there is significance relationship between reliability and empathy of service quality elements directly affect the level of customer satisfaction. The main limitation of this research is focused only fast food industry. There was no opportunity to do a comparative study between fast food versus domestic food industry. Future research will benefit from further improvement by using domestic food as a comparison study.

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Implications for fast food industries service quality and customer satisfaction are then provided in this paper.

**Keywords:** *Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction, Quantitative, Malaysia*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Satisfaction is the amount of fulfilment achieved the customer's expectation or wish. Nowadays, businesses aim to get customer feels satisfied with their products or services. It could be achieved by giving more than what the customer expects from businesses (Tivasuradej, 2019). Customer satisfaction is understood as the emotion where the consumer's portrait after using the particular product or services and then compare their expectation and real product or it could be the outcome that happens solely without contrasting the expectation (Hudson et al., 2015). Hence, satisfaction is the outcome of the disconfirmation of expectations can be said as evaluative satisfaction and satisfaction is a result of non-rational processes should be labelled emotion laden (Singh & Kumar, 2014). Researchers identified that 53.8 percent of buyers would repurchase product from the same business when they're satisfied with the quality of the services (Gandhi, Sachdeva & Gupta, 2019).

Therefore, the question remains how service qualities affects the customer's satisfaction. Researcher stated that service quality is hard to measure for any services. Customers will often have different expectations in service quality and there are many factors influencing customer satisfaction (Lu et al., 2015). In a hotel industry, few factors was identified for services quality such as an empathy and intimacy (Najafi, Saati & Tayana, 2015). Moreover, different customers will have different expectation based on their cultural belief. Other than that, in a hospitality industry such as restaurants and hotel, it is difficult to track the service quality as

these industry combines both products and services.

Good services should have a standard amount of tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy, but it varies differently among customers. It is nearly impossible for service providers to satisfy everyone seems customers has different needs and wants (Grainer, et al. 2014). Researcher identify that service providers faced a complicated situation to meet customers expectation and demand. Other than that, service providers have an outdated perception on what the customer wants rather than what the customers need recently (Ahmet, et al. 2016).

Subsequently, this research desires to identify the real factors that affecting the service quality and customer satisfaction in fast food industry. This research aims to identify the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction towards fast food industry, Kota Damansara, Selangor. The rest of the paper is organized as follows: first discussion of the relevant literature is presented; then the methodology is discussed; findings presented, and finally the paper concludes with a discussion of academic implications and areas for future research.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Service quality can be said as an assessment by the customer based on if the services they have reached customer expectations. It is significant to measure the organization's service performance and it can help attract more potential customer. An organization with excellent service quality can bring greater satisfaction for loyalty customers and them willing to recommend the product and services to others. Other than that, customers will also have fewer complaints and it's easier to retain them (Hill, Brierley & MacDougall, 2017). Service quality are also known by the capability of a service provider to influence the consumer's through the execution of the services. Therefore, researchers identified

analysis to measure the service quality through SERVQUAL analysis, which includes empathy, responsiveness, tangibility, reliability, and assurance elements of service quality (Mazumder & Hasan, 2014).

### ***Tangibility and customer satisfaction in fast food industry***

Tangible is defined as the equipment used, physical facilities and the appearance of the employees in service industry (Yrimoglu, 2014). The dimension of tangibility is closely linked by the physical look of the business such as design, style, and the layout of the shop. Tangibles also includes the physical look which will attract more customers, hence giving it a higher competitive advantage (Saabir et al., 2014). Moreover, researcher identified that tangible elements in retail shops able to forecast customer satisfaction (Oviedo-Garcia et al. 2016).

Consequently, researchers agreed on tangibility is important for service providers as it supports service industry. Based on customer's point of view, items that are available physically in fast food outlets is an attractive factors for the customers and potential customers (Wu & Mohi, 2015; Azim, at al. 2014). Therefore, the hypotheses was generated as per below:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a positive relationship between tangibility and customer satisfaction in fast food industry

### ***Reliability and customer satisfaction in fast food industry***

Reliability is a skills to deliver the mentioned services reliably and perfectly (Santos, et al. 2015). The requirement in order to achieve reliability is higher in business that doesn't have a strong tangible element. Besides that, a service that is bound to be possessed by customers will also need higher reliability. Reliability means that the business can accurately provide the designated service at the first try. Moreover, in the entire dimension mentioned in the

SERVQUAL model, reliability tends to be the dominant dimension.

However, the only way to find the reliability of a service is after the service has taken place, but most of the customer wants the service quality to meet their expectation since the first time. Hence, this has happened to require services that will process information to possess a good reliability impression, such as banking services, financial services and lawyer services (Azim, Shah, Mehmood, Mehmood & Bagram, 2014). Researcher state that, reliability is the best among all of the dimension in terms of getting customer satisfied (Galeeva, 2016). It's also used by most of the researcher as the best indicator of service quality. Therefore, the hypotheses was generated as per below:

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a positive relationship between reliability and customer satisfaction in fast food industry

### ***Responsiveness and customer satisfaction in fast food industry***

Responsiveness is the elements which will help the customers and elicit services (Chanak, Wijetarne & Achcuthan, 2014). Customer satisfaction can be built by having good responsiveness in the service businesses. For instance, employees that has polite attitude and are willing to assist the customers will earn the title of responsiveness for the company. Generally, the customer judges responsiveness of a business through how they perceive the employee (Bihamta, Jayashree, Rezaei, Okumus & Rahimi, 2017). Researcher discovered that, having a nice and friendly employees to provide services will end up with higher chance in the customer satisfaction towards the business (Ali, Basu, & Ware, 2018).

For service providers like the banking services, it is most important for them to be responsive when engaging with customers in order to keep the good reputation (Noort, Willemsen, Kerkhof, & Verhoeven, 2015; Ro, 2015). Besides that, banking service can earn

responsiveness by having an excellent relationship with the customers, as well as help customers if they have any difficulties (Ro, 2015). Elements of responsiveness earned its place as the dimension that relates to customers the most. It will be the most crucial dimension in people based services (Jiang, Jun & Yang, 2016). Therefore, the hypotheses was generated as per below:

H<sub>3</sub>: There is a positive relationship between responsiveness and customer satisfaction in fast food industry

#### ***Assurance and customer satisfaction in fast food industry***

Awareness and politeness of the employee that can grant confidence and reliable feelings to customers (Ro, 2015). It is crucial for the service providers that aims for individual customers that wants more connection towards the business. Service that aims for customers instead of possessions should have extra assurance towards the customers. In addition, services that are mostly intangible need more assurance to begin with (Azim, Shah, Mehmood, Mehmood & Bagram, 2014).

Employees to have a good knowledge about the products and services that they're about to offer and at the same time to be courteous enough to let their customer feel easy and trustworthy (Chanak, Wijetarne & Achcuthan, 2014). Hence, assurance is shaped during the exchange between the employees and customers. By having a good attitude and respect towards the customers, assurance can take place with no difficulties (Kursunluoglu, 2014). Therefore, the hypotheses was generated as per below:

H<sub>4</sub>: There is a positive relationship between assurance and customer satisfaction in fast food industry

#### ***Empathy and customer satisfaction in fast food industry***

Empathy can be known as the individualised and caring attention

the business provides its customers (Galeeva, 2016). There are a few variations that empathy can be describe. The traditional view of empathy is a bad type of emotion that may spread across. How the person thinks and feel will spread to other people as well (Giovanis, Athanasopoulou, & Tsoukatos, 2015). Researchers identified that, customers shall have their own preferences and level of satisfaction by offering them personalized contact (Ali & Raza, 2017).

However, service providers must present empathy feelings by arranging personal attention to customers and potential customers (Ladhari, Souiden, & Dufour, 2017). Actions such as adjusting the operating hour to make it convenience to customer and knowing them personally so the business can provide a service that is best suit for the customers can boost up empathy for customers. Therefore, the hypotheses was generated as per below:

H<sub>5</sub>: There is a positive relationship between empathy and customer satisfaction in fast food industry

### ***Customer satisfaction in fast food industry***

Customer satisfaction is the feelings that customer can gain after doing a complete business with a company. It simply means the level of happiness that customer achieved during their entire transaction with the company (Ahmed, Rizwan, Ahmad, & Haq, 2014). Customer satisfaction is a major factors that a business can focus on. The company has to have in depth knowledge of what and how the customer wants their products or services to be delivered. In order to achieve this level, a lot of communication with customers are recommended. Then, the company can proceed to create an inventory of the customer's feedback, preferences, and complaints. All these information helps an organization to improve their ways to deliver their product and services, hence develop customer satisfaction towards the organization (Rahul, & Majhi, 2014).

## METHODOLOGY

The target population for this research form the Kota Damansara, Selangor which occupied 516, 666 thousands (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2018). Sample size was predetermined by the consideration of the pseudo factorial design used. This study uses customer satisfaction (1) x 5 factors (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) factorial designs. Researcher uses the convenience sampling method in this study (Bobbie, 2007). This study obtained 200 respondents, who were selected from Kota Damasara, Selangor.

The questionnaire was presented in English. The questionnaire had two sections: the first was for demographic; the second covered six propositions which is tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and customer satisfaction. The questionnaires chosen for this research used Likert scale questionnaires. The five anchors used in this interval scale are strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Data was analyzed using mean and multiple linear regression.

## FINDINGS

The respondents profile is summarized in Table 1. The mean score for variables tested by service quality and customer satisfaction factors is depicted in Table 2. Linear regression by service quality factors towards customer satisfaction then presented in Table 3.

**Table 1: Respondent's Profile**

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	91	45.5
	Female	109	54.5
Age	Below 20 years old	35	17.5
	21 – 30 years old	147	73.5
	31 – 40 years old	9	4.5



	41 – 50 years old	8	4.0
	50 years old and above	1	0.5
Nationality	Malaysian	162	81.0
	International	38	19.0
Highest Education Level	Diploma	41	20.5
	Bachelor Degree	108	54.0
	Master Degree	12	6.0
	Doctoral Degree	2	1.0
	Others	37	18.5

Respondents profiles show that the highest percentage the respondents categories from 21 - 30 years old. At the same time, there are 109 female and 91 male respondents have participated in this research. This research shows that majority of the respondents can be categories as Malaysian (81 %) and bachelor's degree holder (54 %).

**Table 2: Mean for Service Quality in Fast Food Industry**

Variable	Overall	
	Mean	S.D.
Tangibility	3.70	0.64
Reliability	3.51	0.74
Responsiveness	3.44	0.73
Assurance	3.55	0.75
Empathy	3.59	0.67
Customer Satisfaction	3.72	0.74

The mean score for all the service quality factors indicates more than 3.00. Results indicate that, the respondents agreed to all the service quality factors influenced customer satisfaction towards fast food industry. Tangibility factors indicate the highest mean score (M: 3.70; S.D.: 0.64). Therefore, respondents agree that they do focus more on physical facilities and the appearance of services

compares to the other factors towards customer satisfaction in fast food industry. Besides, responsiveness indicate the lowest mean score (M: 3.44; S.D.: 0.73). Respondents agree that they do concern on a nice and friendly employees in fast food service provider.

**Table 3: Multiple Linear Regression for Service Quality in Fast Food Industry**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Tangibility	0.096	0.105
Reliability	0.369	0.000
Responsiveness	0.118	0.160
Assurance	0.146	0.058
Empathy	0.167	0.020
R	0.783a	
R square	0.614	
Adjusted R square	0.604	
Significant	0.000b	
F-value	61.644	
Durbin Watson	2.119	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy

b. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

The R square indicates that 61.4% of the total variance in the customer satisfaction is explained by the total of service quality variables (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy). The higher beta value would identified the strengths among service quality variables which contributes to customer satisfaction in fast food industry. The contribution consists of tangibility (B: 0.096; Sig: 0.105), reliability (B: 0.369; Sig: 0.000), responsiveness (B: 0.118; Sig: 0.160); assurance (B: 0.146; Sig: 0.058) and empathy (B: 0.167; Sig: 0.020) towards customer satisfaction.

#### **4.1 Hypothesis Results**

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H <sub>1</sub> : There is a positive relationship between tangibility and customer satisfaction in fast food industry	<i>Rejected</i>
H <sub>2</sub> : There is a positive relationship between reliability and customer satisfaction in fast food industry	<i>Accepted</i>
H <sub>3</sub> : There is a positive relationship between responsiveness and customer satisfaction in fast food industry	<i>Rejected</i>
H <sub>4</sub> : There is a positive relationship between assurance and customer satisfaction in fast food industry	<i>Rejected</i>
H <sub>5</sub> : There is a positive relationship between empathy and customer satisfaction in fast food industry	<i>Accepted</i>

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#### **DISCUSSION**

The objective of this research is to provide an overview of the perception towards service quality and the factors influence towards customer satisfaction in fast food industry. The findings show that there is significant relationship between reliability and empathy factors and customer satisfaction in fast food industry. Reversely, tangibility, responsiveness and assurance shows there is no significant relationship towards customer satisfaction in fast food industry.

Result shows, there is significant relationship between reliability and customer satisfaction in fast food industry. Therefore, this research identified that consumers concern the reliable and perfect service in a fast food services. Previous research was supported where consumers prefer good impression and reliable services from any service sectors (Azim, Shah, Mehmood, Mehmood & Bagram, 2014). Besides, customer satisfaction influenced by reliability among customers to elect the fast food outlets (Galeeva, 2016).

Empathy has a positive relationship towards customer satisfaction

in fast food industry. Therefore, empathy is influenced customer satisfaction when they elect fast food outlets for services. Similarly, previous research indicates that consumers will refer to the the individualised and caring attention from the business provides for its customers (Galeeva, 2016). Researchers identified that, customers shall have their own preferences and level of satisfaction by offering them personalized contact (Ali & Raza, 2017).

Results shows, there is no significant relationship between assurance and customer satisfaction in fast food industry. Therefore, this research identified that consumers not really concern about the awareness and politeness from the employees when it's related to fast food services. Reversely, previous research indicates that Service that aims for customers instead of possessions should have extra assurance towards the customers (Ro, 2015). Yet, services that are mostly intangible need more assurance to begin with (Azim, Shah, Mehmood, Mehmood & Bagram, 2014).

The outcome of this research indicates that tangibility factors have no significant relationship customer satisfaction in fast food industry. It means customers not really bother on equipment used, physical facilities and the appearance of the employees in fast food outlets (Wu & Mohi, 2015; Azim, at al. 2014). Reversely, previous researcher identified tangibility is closely linked by the physical look of the business such as design, style, and the layout of the shop (Yrimoglu, 2014).

There was stronger evidence shows the responsiveness factors have no significant relationship towards customer satisfaction in fast food industry. Past studies show elements of responsiveness earned its place as the dimension that relates to customers the most. It will be the most crucial dimension in people based services (Chanak, Wijetarne & Achcuthan, 2014). Besides, researchers also identify that different types of service providers will have different level of

responsiveness (Bihamta, Jayashree, Rezaei, Okumus & Rahimi, 2017).

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This research has successfully achieved its objective to identify the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in fast food industry. The relationship that was assessed were tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and customer satisfaction. The outcome shows that there are significance relationship between reliability and empathy towards customer satisfaction in fast food industry. Findings indicate that there is significance relationship between reliability and empathy of service quality elements directly affect the level of customer satisfaction.

### ***Managerial Implication***

The outcome of this research will be beneficial for the fast food industry in Malaysia. The outcome allow the fast food industry to know what is the needs and requirement of the customers. Fast food industry able to understand the major factor that customers will consider before purchasing fast food. Hence, the outcome will be useful for the fast food industry to have a more reliable operation and business to serve their customers, which directly increase the level of customer's satisfaction. In future, fast food industry able to take some action against the tangibility, assurance and responsiveness issues. Customer would be one of the beneficiaries as they will be enjoying with a better services provided by fast food industry.

### ***Limitation***

This study focused only on fast food industry and services. There was no opportunity to do a comparative study between fast food versus domestic food industry. This study also an inability to know whether the loyalty and service provider's preferences factors

influence in fast food industry. Aside from that, this study only focused on quantitative method, upgraded to qualitative study to probe more on customer satisfaction in fast food industry.

### ***Future Research***

The research only focuses on service quality and customer satisfaction in fast food industry. Therefore, the researcher should have compared with domestic food providers services. Different types of consumers will have different attitude and behaviour towards food selection. Additionally, future academician can concentrate on a specific industry by focusing on the only type of service providers such as banking, food and beverages, professional service providers. Future academician can also study on the factor that influences on the levels of customer satisfaction of the customer by looking into the respondents' attitude and brand loyalty.

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