RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE INFLUENCE OF SELF-SERVICE EXPERIENCES ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT - Successful companies consistently provide higher levels of satisfaction to their customers. This study is to determine the impact of self-service experiences on customer satisfaction. For the purpose of the study, 120 McDonald's customers were selected for a survey. The results showed that being technologically ready positively and substantially affects customer satisfaction through the medium of Customer Trust. Self-service can be more efficient and successful, and customers can be more satisfied if the necessary technology is in place. Self-service experience quality and client satisfaction are impacted by trust and perceived value. This research contributes to understanding what it takes to keep repeat customers happy and returning for more business.

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Successful companies consistently deliver increased levels of satisfaction to their client. Customers who are entirely content with the company will talk positively about their interactions with the business to others, which will serve as a form of word-of-mouth promotion for the firm. One of the most essential things in developing a competitive edge and achieving success for Mcdonald's is using innovative new ways to provide their services. It allowed the company to completely revamp the design of its eateries and the way it utilised its staff. According to Liu and Hung (2022), the use of automated self-services has become widespread in-service industries and is considered a crucial trend.

By directing clients to self-service kiosks, the company was able to substantially cut the amount of cash handled on-site as card and contactless payments became the norm. Due to this situation, the restaurant redeployed some employees who had been working the register. Park et al. (2021) suggested that incorporating kiosks can result in reduced operating costs, particularly in terms of labor costs, and can help to address labor shortages. This is considered to be a significant advantage for both companies and operators.

Important facets of service evaluation, such as the ideas of perceived risk, perceived value, and perceived satisfaction, are modelled by this framework, which can be thought of as a model. According to the frequency, despite the fact that self-service is deliberately designed to improve quality and contain the necessary information to fulfil customer needs, the self-service experience has not yet achieved up to standards of Performance. This is the case despite the self-service deliberately being designed to improve quality. This is in spite of the fact that the self-service was purposefully developed to enhance the quality of the product. Last but not least, if more individuals were not aware of the potential problems it could cause, it might make the customer experience more difficult.

2.0   RELATED WORK

2.1   *Customer satisfaction*

Satisfied customers have received adequate compensation for purchases at a predetermined price (Jeong et al., 2016). According to Oliver (1999), customer satisfaction is an enjoyable extra activity a consumer performs while utilising a service or product. The purchase only partially satisfies the customer's needs, wants, and expectations. She or he also appreciates participating in this extracurricular pursuit.

According to Jamal et al. (2020), customer happiness is the connecting thread between the various phases of the consumer purchase process. Customer satisfaction is measured before and after the transaction and in terms of the price paid. A number of factors ensure satisfied customers when it comes to their personal data (CIS). There are many facets to a successful business, including sales, information systems (websites), digital products and services, customer support, post-sale service, and company culture. In contrast to other online or traditional retail organisations, e-satisfaction refers to a customer's happiness with their online shopping experience. E-satisfaction is utilised as a proxy for the level of contentment with an online purchase in this investigation.

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2.2   *Perceived quality of self-service*

The phrase "quality of service" refers to the overall evaluation that a consumer gives regarding the performance of a service. Since ancient times, people have considered happy customers a dependable indicator of product quality (Boonlertvanich, 2019). According to Aker (1997), two aspects of quality should be considered when addressing perceived quality: product quality and service quality. During the process of providing services, quality assurance inspections are performed in industries that provide services. Every interaction you have with a customer is a chance to create trust with them or demonstrate that you do not care about their needs (Pakurár et al., 2019). As a consequence, the service quality improves to match, if not even exceed, the consumer's expectations. In the context of the quick-service restaurant industry, "service quality" refers to a patron's perspective or stance with regard to the enhancement of the quality of services provided within a dining establishment (Al-Hawari et al., 2019). This research considers aspects like usability, convenience, enjoyment, quality control, and safety. With this system, clients may get what they want without having to interact with employees directly, leading to improved service quality. While imperfect, this service model can potentially improve the quality of care provided to customers. Offering self-service choices can be done for many different reasons, such as saving money, making customers happier, and attracting new customers (Bitner et al., 2020).

2.3   *Perceived value*

Perceived value is a vital part of the process that must be followed to provide the right product or service to the right client at the right time. Companies can also use the concept of perceived worth to determine comparable costs (Hussain et al., 2015). Previous research has shown that service quality is directly related to the customer's perception of value. Customers will regard services more highly if they require less of the money and effort.

2.4   *Technology readiness*

The term "technological readiness" refers to an individual's adaptability to a given piece of technology in service of their desired end results. Numerous studies have used TRI2.0 to evaluate the rate of adoption of cutting-edge technologies namely mobile payment, mobile social networks, internet access, and self-service technologies (SSTs) among others. Researcher predicted they would need to adapt to technology in order to keep up with the rise of mobile commerce, social networking, and cloud computing.

Customers' attitudes and actions towards technology can be either favourable or unfavourable, showing that technology can yield positive and negative effects. Customers' perspectives and behaviours towards technology can be either favourable or unfavourable. Researcher proposed four variables in assessing people's technological advancement readiness. Each of these variables considers both positive and negative attitudes people have on technological growth. As you will see in the next phrases, you can evaluate these traits based on how optimistic you are, how innovative you are, how uncomfortable you are, and how insecure you are. Customers have the misconception that technology, despite being adaptable and adjustable, can support them in delivering services more efficiently. The second component, innovation, is beneficial since it satisfies consumers' wishes to use contemporary technologies. In regards to this situation, the invention is a quality that should be admired. The core cause of consumers' adverse opinions of being controlled is a lack of trust in the technology and its capabilities practice. The root cause of customers' uneasiness is a lack of trust in the technology and its capabilities in general. This component additionally exemplifies the unfavourable emotions that the clients hold.

3.0   HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

There have been many studies on service quality and customer happiness. Rangriz et al. (2013) also looked into the current state of providing services online. Electronic and self-service operations in service organisations rely heavily on customers' readiness, perceived utility, and ease of use. Saleem et al. (2017) and Setiawan and Sayuti (2017), among others, have discussed the correlation between trust and happiness.

H1. Customer trust influences customer satisfaction.

It was proven that one of the most important factors in determining customer happiness is the perceived value of the product or service. Numerous research, such as those carried out by Konuk (2018) and Garca-Fernández et al. (2018), have found a correlation between the ratings that customers give of a product or service and the level of contentment that they report experiencing with that product or service. There is a substantial correlation between customers' faith in McDonald's and the quality of service they will receive. This idea is supported by Marakanon and Panjakajornsak (2017) and Konuk (2017), who investigated the connection between perceived value and the happiness of consumers (2018). Alongside the values of reliability and the perceived value of consumers, research will be conducted on service quality in customer pleasure and self-service experience for customers.

H2. Perceived value influences customer satisfaction.

According to Lin and Hsieh (2007), the level of technical expertise possessed by a customer is the single most critical element in determining the level of success that may be achieved through self-service initiatives. To restate this idea, improved customer service is the direct effect of beginning with tech-savvy clients. Boon-itt (2015) argued that consumer technical readiness significantly affects judgements of the quality of the self-service experience; consequently, it stands to reason that customers' impressions of the experience would improve with greater technological readiness. On the other

hand, Strutt et al. (2022) demonstrated that the degree of technological preparation significantly contributed to the level of customer happiness. Several researchers, have recently written about the relationship between trust and happiness.

H3. Technology readiness influences customer trust.

4.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A research framework, depicted in Figure 1, was developed in accordance with the research topic and the literature review.
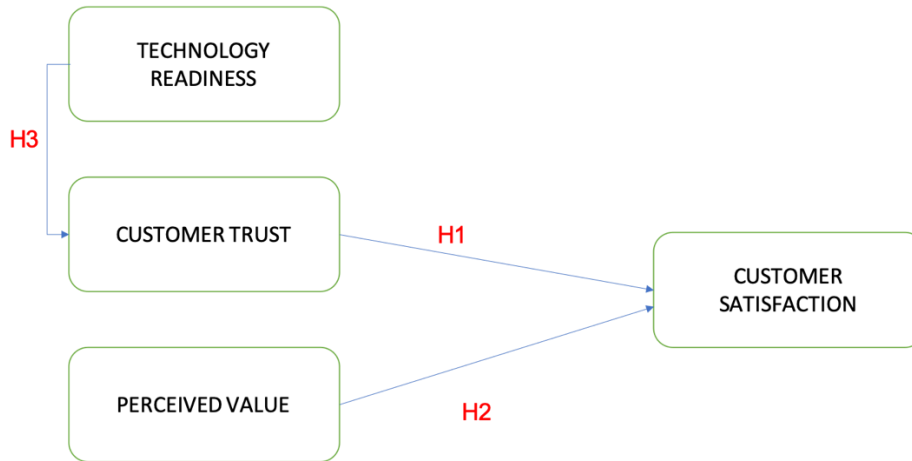

Figure 1. Conceptual framework

5.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

McDonald's customers were the main source of data for this study. Eliminating unnecessary factors led to the selection of McDonald's with the most locations and consumers. The data collection spanned from July through October 2022. In order to make reliable conclusions about the effects of the operational parameters under research, this research required at least 120 replies from Malaysian McDonald's. In addition to that, the researchers collected the data through an online poll.

6.0 RESULT

Regarding gender, male respondents made up 50.9% (representing 59 total respondents), while female respondents made up 49.1% (representing 57 total respondents). This could be due, at least in part, to the fact that men typically have more free time than women do and, as a result, choose to spend it at McDonald's. The following inquiry concerns the age of those who filled out the survey. According to Table 1, the largest proportion of respondents is between the ages of 21 and 30 years old (60%) followed by those who are younger than 20 years old (25%). 15.00% of the respondents are between the ages of 31 and 40, the youngest group. This is due to the fact that people in the age range 31 and below are more difficult to communicate with than younger people. Next, for levels of education, those with at least an STPM, A-Level, or foundational degree have the highest response rate.

The total number of respondents with a STPM/A' Level/foundation background is 45, which represents 37.5%, followed by 26 respondents with a Bachelor Degree, which have 21.70%. The lowest percentage of respondents came from those with master's degrees or an MBA (6.70%), followed by those with doctoral degrees (0.80%). There are just 25 individuals who have a background with a Diploma, making up 20.80% of the total. The total number of respondents from SPM/0'Level is 15, which represents 12.5%, and there is no respondent for PMR, which represents 0. As for the racial aspect, there are a total of 75 Malay respondents who filled out the questionnaire. Next, 31 Chinese respondents filled out the questionnaire, followed by 12 Indian respondents. This is because there are a significantly higher number of Malay people living in Malaysia compared to either the Chinese or the Indian population. Last but not least, when compared, students had the greatest response rate for employment status compared to other types of respondents, 78, all of whom are students, constitutes 65% of the sample, while the number of employed respondents, 24, accounts for 20%. Following that comes self-employment, which accounts for 12.5% of the workforce with 15 people. There are only three people who said that they were unable to work, with 2.5 percent.

Table 1. Demographic profile

	Information	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender		
	Male	59	50.9
	Female	57	49.1
	Total	116	100.0
2	Age (years)		
	Below 20	30	25.0
	21 to 30	72	60.0
	31 to 40	18	15.0
	Total	120	100.0
3	Ethnicity		
	Malay	75	62.5
	Chinese	31	25.8
	Indian	12	10.0
	Total	118	100.0
4	Highest Education Level		
	PMR	0	0
	SPM / 0'Level	15	12.5
	STPM/ A' Level/foundation	45	37.5
	Diploma	25	20.8
	Bachelor Degree	26	21.7
	Masters/MBA	8	6.7
	PHD	1	0.8
	Total	120	100.0
5	Employment status		
	Employed for wages	24	20.0
	Self-employed	15	12.5
	A student	78	65.0
	Unable to work	3	2.5
	Total	120	100.0

6.1   Descriptive Analysis

The mean value of technological readiness was observed to understand which elements are the most responsible for their impact on customer satisfaction. It is generally accepted that the factor that has the most influence on the dependent variable is the independent variable whose mean value is the highest. The mean score for customer trust is 4.42, and the standard deviation is 0.43. This is the category with the highest score. As a result, customer trust has the biggest impact on the perceived quality of the self-service experience, which has the greatest influence on customer happiness in Malaysia. The fact that the mean score for all of the impacts of perceived quality of self-service experience on customer satisfaction is more than three or neutral indicates that the respondents have a positive attitude about the questions posed.

Table 2. Descriptive analysis

Constructs	Mean	Standard Deviation
Customer's satisfaction (CS)	4.3917	0.41090
Perceived value (VA)	4.3833	0.43354
Customer trust (CT)	4.4250	0.42826
Technology readiness (TR)	4.3083	0.40054

6.2   Measurement model

In order to ensure convergent validity, the outer loading value must be greater than 0.70, and in order to calculate the Average Variance Extracted or AVE, the values must be greater than 0.50. In the event that the value of outside loadings is lower than 0.70, the entry will be removed. Due to the fact that the values are lower than 0.70, the item depicted in

Figure 2 and Table 3 is thought to be removed. After removing the component below, all of the values have increased to more than 0.70 at this point. These results accurately demonstrate convergent validity.
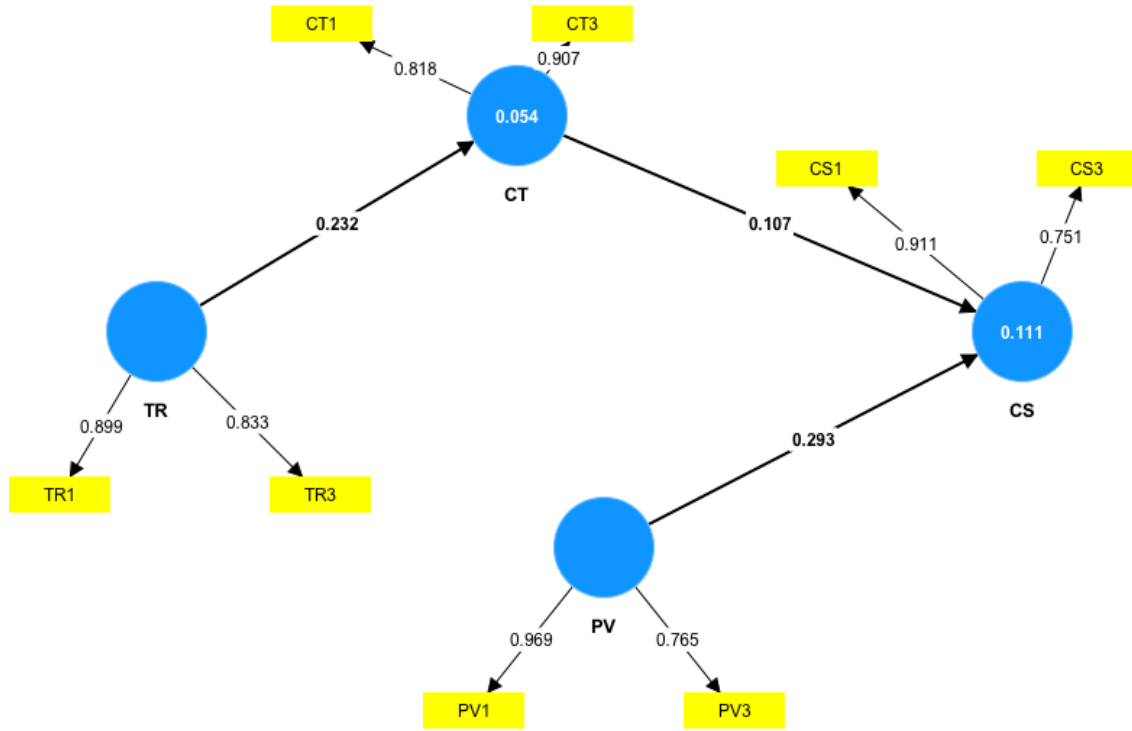

Figure 2. Initial path model

Table 3 presents the outers loading for four constructs including Customer's satisfaction (CS), Customer trust (CT), Perceived value (PV), and Technology readiness (TR)

Table 3. Outers loading

Constructs	Items	Loadings
Customer's satisfaction (CS)	CS1	0.922
	CS3	0.733
Customer trust (CT)	CT1	0.855
	CT3	0.876
Perceived value (PV)	PV1	0.912
	PV3	0.864
Technology readiness (TR)	TR1	0.900
	TR3	0.832

Table 4 below summarises outer loadings, composite reliability, and Average Variance Extracted. From the table, all composite values are higher than 0.60, which means that they are reliable. The values of AVE are more than 0.50, which reflects good convergent validity.

Table 4. Internal consistency reliability and convergent validity results

Constructs	Items	Loadings	α	ρ_c	AVE
Customer satisfaction (CS)	CS1	0.922	0.584	0.817	0.694
	CS3	0.733			
Customer trust (CT)	CT1	0.855	0.666	0.857	0.749
	CT3	0.876			
Perceived value (PV)	PV1	0.912	0.735	0.882	0.789
	PV3	0.864			
Technology readiness (TR)	TR1	0.900	0.672	0.857	0.750
	TR3	0.832			

*Note: Item CS2, CS4, PV2, CT2, CT4, TR2 were removed to fulfil convergent validity threshold.

According to Table 5, the value of customer trust over customer satisfaction is 0.289, the perceived value over customer trust is 0.384, and technology readiness over perceived value is 0.315.

Table 5. Discriminant validity result (HTMT ratio)

	CS	CT	PV	TR
CS				
CT	.289			
PV	.395	.384		
TR	.145	.332	.315	

6.3 Structural model

Table 6 shows the results of the hypotheses. Three hypotheses was tested. Two of the hypotheses in the research are supported. This is because all the p-values are less than 0.05. As a result, it may be concluded that one of the hypotheses put up in the research is not substantiated. For the p-value to be considered significant, it must be lower than the significant value (0.05). As a result, customer trust does not have a positive association with customer satisfaction for hypothesis 1, which examines the influence of the perceived quality of the self-service experience on customer satisfaction at McDonald's Malaysia. The second hypothesis shows a favourable correlation between perceived value and overall customer satisfaction. In hypothesis 3, being technologically prepared has a favourable relationship with the customer's trust.

Table 6. Hypothesized relationships (direct)

Relationships	VIF	β	SD	t-value	p-value	Confidence Interval LL	UL	Effect Size (f^2)	Explanatory Power (R^2)	Decision
H1: CT → CS	1.051	0.007	0.105	1.027	0.305	0.097	0.317	0.012	0.111	Unsupported
H2: PV → CS	1.051	0.017	0.88	3.314	0.001	0.128	0.473	0.092		Supported
H3: TR → CT	1.000	0.013	0.093	2.503	0.012	0.075	0.418	0.057	0.054	Supported

*Note. SD = Standard Deviation, LL = Lower Limit, UL = Upper Limit, VIF = Variance Inflation Factor

7.0 DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1 shows an insignificant effect of customer trust on customer satisfaction. This might be due to the context of the study which might shows a lack of trust on self-service in McDonald's. The technical readiness of the self-service also has an effect how customers build trust on self-service. In Hypothesis 2, customers are more likely to have faith in the business that provides a service when that service's quality is improved. After concluding that trust does not play a role in the level of e-satisfaction customers experience, the logical next step is to investigate the hypothesis that technology readiness plays a role in the level of e-satisfaction customers experience via the quality of self-service options. Customers who have faith that a company will be able to fulfil their requirements are more inclined to approach that company to form a collaborative collaboration. It is crucial for customers that the service provider they choose consider their requirements and adjust to the shifting conditions both within and outside the organisation (Liu et al., 2008). Earning the trust of your consumers is vital if you want to leave a lasting impact on them and raise the happiness they feel with your business. There is widespread consensus among industry professionals that the degree to which a customer is at ease utilising self-service options is one of the most important determinants of the overall quality of their experience (Boon-itt, 2015).

It is better to improve the characteristics that generate consumer confidence since trust can have a good and large effect on customer satisfaction. This is because trust can be earned in a variety of ways. In order to guarantee the highest possible level of satisfaction for McDonald's customers, the company's self-service machines and other gadgets, including their safety aspects, demand special attention. Multiple studies have pointed to a variety of elements that have a role in determining the level of satisfaction experienced by McDonald's customers. Potential factors include the users' perceptions of the service's usefulness and accessibility, as well as the users' own capabilities, the functionality of their devices, the value and informative content of the service, and the service's efficiency in terms of both the users' own time and the user's time. Many studies corroborated this idea, yet it was still rejectedFurthermore, additional questions might have produced different outcomes as there were just three questions utilised to assess trust in this study.

In Hypothesis 3, the idea that one gets more for their money despite making fewer payments gives the impression of value. The difference between the amount paid for an item or service and the degree to which the purchaser is pleased with that item or service is what economists refer to as value. The combination of a low price and a high-quality result in a favourable opinion of value. On the other hand, the functional value is an all-encompassing picture of the value developed using empirical methods. According to the research findings, providing outstanding customer service has a significant and favourable impact on customers' opinions of the product or service's value (Ho & Ko, 2008; Boon-itt,

2015). The excellent experiences that customers have with financial services are a significant contributor to their overall value. Customers who are pleased with the technology they are utilising can better get past the first learning curve and recognise the advantages of using self-service processes. Customers value the absence of human involvement, the convenience of self-service alternatives, the ability to save time and money, and the speed which technical solutions can be implemented. If consumers are aware and appreciate these benefits, they will have a more favourable attitude on SSTs, which will result in them judging the value of SSTs to be higher. The findings of Boon-itt (2015) and Hsu et al. (2013) research lend credence to this argument.

Previous studies have shown that boosting a customer's perception of the value they receive for the money they spend is one of the most effective ways to boost overall customer satisfaction with a product or service. As a result of the fact that perceived value is a second-order factor, it follows that perceived quality must already exist before it can be taken into consideration. In addition to this, the support of related theories and the approval of the work from academics such as Boon-itt (2015), Lin (2007), and Hsu et al. (2013) provides additional evidence in favour of the second hypothesis (H2). Thus, customers' perceptions of product quality significantly impact the value they place on the products they buy and services they experience online.

8.0   CONCLUSIONS

The study's constraints require further explanation and could lead to potential areas for future investigation. The study was designed to assess a theory that could appear impartial. However, construct validity was ensured in this study. This study contributed to the practitioners, where managers can use this information to better understand the relationship between consumers' technological sophistication and their perceptions of service quality and satisfaction. This prompts management to deliberate thoroughly before acting. Identifying customers' needs through observation is becoming increasingly important as consumers become more enlightened and thus have higher expectations of the services they use. More care should be taken to meet their client's requirements. First, determining the clients' technological competence helps service providers better meet their needs. Customers' feelings of gratitude will increase, leading to stronger brand loyalty.

Both self-service quality and consumer perception of its worth, as well as self-service quality and technology readiness, have the strongest correlation coefficients in the route analysis. This means that McDonald's and banks must design self-service environments inclusive of customers of varying socioeconomic statuses and cultural backgrounds. Authorities in developing countries should offer free training programmes to better prepare clients for the technological advances that are taking place. McDonald's is recommended to lower the price of such services and build better infrastructures to get an edge in the market, attract new customers, and retain existing ones. Many factors must be considered in the design of such systems, including constant availability, straightforward installation and use, fool proof functionality, and precise data capture and presentation. In this way, businesses can guarantee superior service to their patrons.

The last recommendations come from a study of the correlation coefficients between customer trust and self-service quality. This demonstrates that McDonald's may increase consumer trust by enhancing self-service quality. Due to this situation, it is crucial to take into account variables like continual access, efficient launch and implementation, faultless performance throughout the operation, no internet outage, and precise order-taking while designing such a system. It is advised that consumers have constant, simple access to this platform because of the variables that contribute to the overall perception of the self-service experience. It is important that McDonald's have a system in place that can dependably take orders, get those orders to the kitchen, deal with any problems that may develop, speed things up with associated procedures, and improve itself over time. Websites give users reliable information that is useful for making decisions. The system must be monitored so that it does not take any action, and ways of misusing information on the internet must be eliminated. McDonald's also has to improve the safety of its online infrastructure. Information pertaining to a transaction should be kept secure.

Future research can investigate from the perspective of elaborating the theory by analysing more in-depth and with rigorous data. Other national settings and industries can be further explored by future research.

9.0   ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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