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FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: A STUDY ON QUICK SERVICE RESTAURANT IN SABAK BERNAM, SELANGOR

Nurul Ashykin Abd Aziz¹, Suzilawani Samrin², Khairunnisa Abdul Aziz^{3*}

^{1,2,3}Faculty of Industrial Management
Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah,
Lebuhraya Persiaran Tun Khalil Yaakob, 26300, Kuantan Pahang

Corresponding author: nisaaziz@ump.edu.my

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, all types of businesses and industries are facing global competition, and the quick service restaurant franchise industry is no exception. Every time there will definitely be a new brand or business that offers a variety of goods and services in its own way in an effort to attract customers and find profit. For a quick service restaurant, the most important thing is the quality of its fast service in serving customers comparable to its quick and easy concept. However, the experience for customers who buy products or use services at a quick service restaurant needs to be taken care of and ensured that it meets their needs and wishes. This paper focuses on fast food restaurants in Sabak Bernam, Selangor. This study determines the factors of marketing experience based on five dimensions of marketing experience, namely: i, sense experience; ii, feel experience; iii, think experience; iv, act experience; and v, relate experience. This study adopted a quantitative methodology through a survey on 377 respondents who are customers at a quick service restaurant in Sabak Bernam, Selangor. A convenience sampling technique was used, and data were collected through an online survey using google forms. The statistical data were analysed by Smart-PLS version 4. The findings concluded that only sense experience and relate experience were positively related to customer satisfaction. The findings of this study are beneficial to the management of the quick service restaurant and can be used as a guide for them to improve and plan

strategies to increase the level of customer satisfaction in the future. This study also suggests that future studies can explore other factors related to customer satisfaction more widely.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, quick service restaurant, PLS-SEM

INTRODUCTION

Most industries are seeing more competition both locally and globally, and franchising is no exception. In a world that is getting busier every day, every individual wants to buy food at franchise quick service restaurants with faster service, maybe less than 10 minutes. As time goes on, more and more brands from various businesses compete for consumer loyalty in an effort to increase sales and reduce expenses. Maintaining customer loyalty and happiness is a priority for most businesses these days. According to Tian (2022), the homogeneity of products and the level of competitiveness in a crowded market have increased as a result of the progress of science and technology. So, the secret to increasing a brand's competitiveness is to create an unrepeatably customer experience. The quick service restaurant sector is home to a large number of franchises and brands, including Marry Brown, Pizza Hut, McDonald's, and many more (Abd Aziz et al., 2020, 2021, 2022). Quick service restaurant is one of the fast growing chains in the local franchise industry (Abd Aziz et al., 2019; Abd Aziz et al., 2021; Abd Latif et al., 2021).

The majority of franchises operating today place a strong emphasis on product quality, consumer behaviour, and market competition. However, businesses often underestimate the value of experiential marketing to maximize customer happiness when they purchase their products or services. Marketing can provide customers with an unforgettable experience by putting into practice ideas to produce a pleasant experience (Sukmaputra, 2018). Experiential marketing combines psychological and physical elements that make it easier for customers to interact with business services. Hamzah and Shamsudin (2020) highlighted that an important part when running a business is customer satisfaction which is related to the survival of the business. It emphasised how important it is for businesses to retain their customers for the improvement of their current market. Soliha et al. (2021) claimed that increased customer satisfaction results from a better marketing experience. According to Sukmaputra (2018), businesses should focus on maximizing their services to increase customer satisfaction levels. This is because it will influence the customer's decision to continue using the company's services. Experience-based marketing offers more advantages to manufacturers and business owners. It fosters strong relationships with current customers, attracts new customers, and ultimately fosters customer loyalty (Zena & Hadisumarto, 2013). As explained by Hong (2022), quick service restaurant's franchise brand recorded sales growth in 2021 of 15% which is RM 2.34 billion compared to 2020. This figure shows the widespread use of franchise brands' services and products among customers.

There is an issue of consumer satisfaction with one of the quick service restaurants in Sabak Bernam, Selangor where it focuses on several aspects of user experience, such as sense experience, feel experience, act experience, think experience and relate experience. According to Karadeniz et al. (2013), sense experience describes how the client interprets experiential media, such as visual, aural, or tactile responses. According to some points of view, advertisements on television or social media may not meet the expectations depicted (Tok Jabit, 2014). The emotional component of the customer experience, including feelings and emotions, is included in the taste experience. The intention is to provide a satisfying and effective experience, ranging from goodwill toward the brand to strong feelings of happiness and satisfaction (Zi-Ying & Ling-Yun, 2011). This component of user enjoyment may be hindered by the absence of a favorite menu, which can lower the customer's mood. Customer perception of surprise and education caused by the media is included in the concept of experience (Karadeniz et al., 2013). Negative perceptions spread by the media can result in unpleasant experiences (Kamalya, 2020).

According to Karadeniz et al. (2013), active experiences can enhance customers' lives by focusing on their physical experiences and exhibiting different ways of living, interactions, and lifestyles (Karl, 2017). According to Chang et al. (2011), relational experiences centre on personal relationships, social groups (i.e. gender, occupation, ethnicity, and lifestyle), and social entities (i.e. country and culture). It also includes the purchase and consumption of certain goods, and achieving social acceptance and taste. Therefore, the aim of this study is to ascertain whether experiential marketing actually affects customer satisfaction. Little research has been done on the mechanisms of experiential marketing influencing consumers while existing research on experiential marketing of fast food restaurants focuses mainly on matching strategies.

This research encompassed several significant aspects of the study. Firstly, it allows the quick service restaurant manager to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the significance of experiential marketing in relation to customer satisfaction. This research has the potential to contribute to the enhancement of experiential marketing strategies, thereby improving customer satisfaction. Secondly, it holds importance for the franchisee as it enables them to further enhance their experiential marketing efforts to foster customer loyalty. This study will provide valuable insights to the manager regarding the impact of experiential marketing on attaining customer loyalty. Lastly, this study has the potential to contribute to the provision of better experiential marketing, ultimately leading to improved customer satisfaction for this franchisee. Consequently, this will contribute to increased profitability and sales for the franchisee in the future.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study has tested the following objectives:

- a. To test the relationship between sensory experience and customer satisfaction.
- b. To test the relationship between taste experience and customer satisfaction.
- c. To test the relationship between thinking experience and customer satisfaction.
- d. To test the relationship between acting experience and customer satisfaction.
- e. To test the relationship between relate experience and customer satisfaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Experiential Marketing

Ihtiyar et al. (2019) stated that experiential marketing involves the use of customer experience to market a product or service in a way that makes the customer feel something. Experiential marketing is an advertising method that focuses on the experiences and emotions of customers as they interact with a particular product or service from a firm (Schmitt, 1999). Sense experience, feel experience, think experience, act experience and relate experiences must all be included when measuring experiential marketing. In the right circumstances, this marketing expertise is truly beneficial. The focus of experiential marketing is on the customer's previous use of services and products. A company's experiential marketing efforts will generate feedback that is very helpful for improving the goods or services already offered. In addition, experiential marketing is the process of identifying and satisfying customer needs and encouraging aspirations while engaging consumers in a two-way dialogue that gives the brand personality and adds value to the target market (Smilansky, 2009; Tangkuman, 2020).

Sense Experience

Sensory experience is an effort to produce a sensory experience that is connected to the five senses that humans have (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). According to Karadeniz et al. (2013), sense experience refers to how customers respond to experiential media, such as visual, aural, or plant responses and tactile outcomes. Alkilani et al. (2013) asserted that consumers' sense experience allow them to create experiential logic with the goal of creating value judgments about the goods and services provided. Behavioral, emotional, cognitive, relational, and symbolic values make up this interrelated value assessment. In addition, the sensory aspect involves the five senses and has an impact on our perception, evaluation, and action. It can be used to assess the extent to which people perceive abstract qualities such as color, taste, texture, and smell (Barrios, 2012; Larocca et al., 2020).

Feel experience

Feel experience refers to the customer's strong feelings about the events that occur when they buy and enjoy the goods or services they need. According to Lin et al. (2009), emotional experience is a feeling that aims to make the customer's experience enjoyable, and it can range from a small amount of goodwill towards the business to deep feelings of joy and satisfaction. Zi-Ying and Ling-Yun (2011) explained that feel experience is an emotional experience that combines feeling and feeling with the intention to produce an effective experience that ranges from a weak good mood associated with a brand to strong emotions of joy and satisfaction. Meanwhile, Schmitt (2002) in Larocca et al. (2020) stated that stimulation of the feeling dimension (feel) is used to evoke the user's mood and emotions, which may range from happy tendencies to strong feelings of pride and joy. The individual feelings and emotions of the user give rise to a variety of affective and emotional experiences, such as fear, confidence, dissatisfaction, shame, love, joy, worry, envy, calmness, enthusiasm, sadness, satisfaction, and loneliness. It is important for the experience provider to understand how well the stimulus is received by the user. Meanwhile, Chouyluam (2021) claimed that marketing emphasizes experiences with strong sensations and emotions for consumers to foster favourable attitudes and feelings towards the product.

Think experience

The purpose of the think experience is to engage customers and encourage them to use their creativity to build cognition after interacting with the firm's various goods and services. The two aspects of this experience are artistic and cognitive. Think of it as one of the steps taken to transform a commodity into an experience that can be continuously adapted to attract customers to an organization's services and goods. The customer's perception of the surprise and illumination caused by the media is included in the term "thinking experience" (Karadeniz et al., 2013). According to Schmitt (2002) in Larocca et al. (2020), the goal of the cognitive dimension (thinking) is to stimulate users' thinking by encouraging them to engage in complex and imaginative thinking and can even lead to a paradigm shift and cause users to rethink their expectations. Chouyluam (2021) stated that the purpose of thinking experience is to encourage innovation in problem-solving among users.

Act experience

Customers are connected through experiential media during action experiences that help them develop a sense of social identity and belonging. Some experiences that try to influence consumer behavior, way of life, and relationships with those who have used the services and goods of various businesses can be considered as activities. According to Yuliawan and Ginting (2016), acting is also described as an action that aims to provide user experience related to physical, lifestyle, and social interaction. Karadeniz et al. (2013) stated that acting experience is improving the lives of customers by focusing on their physical

interactions and exposing them to a different way of life, interactions and ways of doing things. It describes experiences with interpersonal interactions and links them to social contexts. Our bodies are full of experiences and sources of beneficial sensations and perceptions (Larocca et al., 2020). The goal is to provide body sensations that change social interactions, behavior patterns and ways of life. In addition, Chouyluam (2021) explained that marketing that tries to improve the experience of using or consuming products of the target group is focused on the experience of physical behavior.

Relate experience

The taste, feel, think, and action components of experiential marketing can all be combined to create a relevant experience. Relate experience can refer to a variety of experiences that mix various parts of the senses, feel, think, and act with the goal of influencing the user and focusing on forming a good perception in their eyes. Moreover, it is a powerful experience produced by the interaction between users and social and cultural meaning. Relate experiences based on individual relationships, social communities (i.e. gender, occupation, ethnicity, and lifestyle), and social entities (i.e. country and culture) through the acquisition of social recognition and a sense of belonging. The relationship dimension includes experiences related to interpersonal relationships and linking them with social context (Chang et. al, 2021; Schmitt (2002); Larocca et. al (2020). Chouyluam (2021) highlighted that experience is the sensation brought by interacting with or maintaining relationships with social and cultural groups.

Customer Satisfaction

Many factors can determine customer satisfaction. Validation of customer satisfaction is determined by the buyer's emotions and supported by an efficient structure. Park et al. (2019) found that affective factors, such as risk value and consumer emotions, can affect customer satisfaction. Satisfied consumers are less likely to switch to rivals, and loyal consumers become less price-sensitive, increasing sales results (Xu & Li, 2016). In the field of marketing, customer satisfaction and how it is defined need to be studied. Robustness for user enjoyment over time needs to be checked as claimed by Dawes et al. (2020). According to Ali et al. (2018), satisfaction depends on several aspects, including psychological, economic and physical factors. The key to buyer awareness and prosperity is satisfaction (Meesala & Paul, 2018). The value of customer satisfaction is the result of using limited resources and meeting unmet needs (Otto et al., 2020). Efendi (2020) and Gunawan (2022) highlighted that customer satisfaction is a post-purchase evaluation where the chosen alternative at least provides the same results or exceeds the consumer's expectations. Customer dissatisfaction would arise if the results obtained are not according to or below the user's expectations.

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Based on the findings of their study, Tsaor, Chiu, and Wang (2008) concluded that there may be an indirect relationship between customer satisfaction and experiential marketing (feel, feel, think, act, and relate). This study aims to increase the effect of experiential marketing on consumer satisfaction in fast food outlets in Sabak Bernam, Selangor (ie, taste, feel, think, act, and relate). The following theories were developed as a result of the initial debate and a brief review of the literature. These are the five hypotheses tested in this study:

- H1: Sense experience is positively related to customer satisfaction.
- H2: Feel experience is positively related to customer satisfaction.
- H3: Think experience is positively related to customer satisfaction.
- H4: Act experience is positively related to customer satisfaction.

H5: Relate experience is positively related to customer satisfaction.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study will use quantitative methodology. Quantitative research is a systematic and empirical approach to investigating phenomena in a structured manner through the collection and analysis of numerical data (Meng & Lu, 2017). This method is characterized by its reliance on measurable variables and statistical tools to draw objective and general conclusions. In quantitative research, researchers use various data collection techniques such as experiments and surveys that can be measured from a representative sample or population. They then use statistical analysis to interpret the data, identify patterns, relationships, and trends, and draw statistically significant conclusions. For this study, simple sampling was used through customers who visited a quick-service restaurant in Sabak Bernam, Selangor.

According to Hair et al. (2011), convenience sampling involves selecting the most accessible sample components to participate in the current study and can provide the necessary information. A total of 377 samples from 18,346 residents of Sabak Bernam, Selangor who frequently visit quick-service restaurants were selected as part of the main data set. An online survey was used to collect data for this study. Google forms have been distributed through social media channels such as Facebook and WhatsApp application to the customers involved. The survey questions have been divided into three parts, namely: (i) Part A: demographic profile; (ii) Part B: experiential marketing; and (iii) Section C: satisfaction of customers who visit the quick service restaurant in Sabak Bernam, Selangor. The data analysis method used for this study is structural equation modeling (SEM). This method of data analysis is based on relationships that offer a comprehensive and consistent explanation of real phenomena. Version 4 of SmartPLS is a specialized application currently being used to analyze raw data. This software feature uses structural equation modeling (SEM) to provide systematic knowledge of data analysis, resulting in more accurate and comprehensive conclusions.

RESULTS

Demographic Profile of Respondent

Table 1

Demographic Profiles

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	174	46.2
Female	203	53.8
Age		
20 and below	14	3.7
21 - 25	260	69
26 - 30	86	22.8

31 - 35	15	4
35 above	2	0.5
Race		
Malay	177	46.9
Chinese	136	36.1
Indian	64	17
Academic Qualification		
PMR	7	1.9
SPM/O'level	330	87.5
Diploma	40	10.6
Occupational Status		
Student	34	9
Employment	342	90.7
Frequency visiting Fast Food Restaurant		
A few times a week	19	5
Once a week	76	20.2
A couple times a month	221	58.6
Rarely	60	15.9

For the present study, the analysis shows that the number of respondents was 377, of which 174 (46.2%) were male and 203 (53.8%) were female. Thus, it indicates that most respondents are female. According to Table 1, the analysis of the age of the respondents can be summarized as follows: most of the respondents' age ranges from 21 to 25 years, with 260 respondents (69%), followed by 26 to 30 years with 86 respondents (22.8%). Respondents below 20 years old constituted 14 respondents (3.7%), while those between 31 and 35 years had 15 respondents (4%). The smallest group of respondents was aged 35 years and above, with only 2 respondents (0.5%). Table 1 shows the analysis of race, indicating that most respondents are Malay, with 177 respondents (46.9%), followed by Chinese with 136 respondents (36.1%), and Indians with 64 respondents (17%). Concerning academic qualifications, the results show that 7 respondents (1.9%) had PMR, 330 respondents (87.5%) had SPM/O'level, and 40 respondents (10.6%) had a Diploma. Regarding the occupational status for this study, there were two categories: employment, with 342 respondents (90.7%), and students, with 34 respondents (9%). Lastly, the frequency of visiting fast food restaurants has also been considered. The results indicate that 19 respondents (5%) visit a few times a week, 76 respondents (20.2%) visit once a week, 221 respondents (58.6%) visit a couple of times a month, and 60 respondents (15.9%) visit rarely.

Convergent validity

Convergent validity is a process that helps construct validity when you use two different measurement procedures and research methods. This is because, when done it should have a relation to reality. It is created if two similar constructs occur able to adapt to each other. While the validity of such discrimination can be applied to two different constructs that are easily distinguished. Table 2 shows convergent validity in this research.

Table 2*Convergent Validity*

Constructs	Items	Loading	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	AVE
Act	A1	0.881	0.924	0.934	0.74
	A2	0.907			
	A3	0.825			
	A4	0.871			
	A6	0.813			
Customer Satisfaction	CS1	0.927	0.968	0.968	0.857
	CS2	0.94			
	CS4	0.928			
	CS5	0.886			
	CS6	0.947			
Feel	F1	0.823	0.897	0.922	0.704
	F2	0.89			
	F3	0.854			
	F4	0.868			
	F6	0.754			
Relate	R6	0.962	0.916	0.959	0.921
	R7	0.957			
Sense	S1	0.845	0.934	0.93	0.655
	S2	0.854			
	S3	0.818			
	S4	0.831			
	S5	0.701			
	S6	0.809			
	S7	0.797			
Think	T3	0.849	0.883	0.912	0.723
	T4	0.89			
	T5	0.882			
	T6	0.774			

Table 3

Result of Analysis (Hypothesis testing)

Hypothesis	Path	β	STDEV	t-value	p-values	Decision
H1	Sense -> Customer Satisfaction	0.244	0.037	6.602	0.00	Supported
H2	Feel -> Customer Satisfaction	-0.011	0.058	0.192	0.848	Not Supported
H3	Think -> Customer Satisfaction	0.02	0.065	0.307	0.759	Not Supported
H4	Act -> Customer Satisfaction	0.088	0.066	1.333	0.183	Not Supported
H5	Relate -> Customer Satisfaction	0.099	0.047	2.098	0.036	Supported

Noted: Standard Beta= β ; Standard deviation=STDEV.

Table 3 shows the result for the following hypothesis and discuss as follow:

H1: Sense experience is positively related to the customer satisfaction

According to Table 3, this hypothesis suggests that there is a positive relationship between the Sense Experience and Customer Satisfaction. The hypothesis path was positive and significant with ($\beta= 0.244$, $t= 6.602$, $p= 0.00$). In conclusion, the discussion for this hypothesis is accepted.

H2: Feel experience is positively related to the customer satisfaction

Refer to Table 3, this hypothesis suggests that there is a positive relationship between the Feel Experience and Customer Satisfaction. The hypothesis path was negative and insignificant with ($\beta= -0.011$, $t= 0.192$, $p= 0.848$). In conclusion, the discussion for this hypothesis is rejected.

H3: Think experience is positively related to the customer satisfaction

According to Table 3, this hypothesis suggests that there is a positive relationship between the Think Experience and Customer Satisfaction. The hypothesis path was positive and insignificant with ($\beta= 0.02$, $t= 0.307$, $p= 0.759$). In conclusion, the discussion for this hypothesis is rejected.

H4: Act experience is positively related to the customer satisfaction

Refer to Table 3, this hypothesis suggests that there is a positive relationship between the Act Experience and Customer Satisfaction. The hypothesis path was positive and insignificant with ($\beta= 0.088$, $t= 1.333$, $p= 0.183$). In conclusion, the discussion for this hypothesis is rejected.

H5: Relate experience is positively related to the customer satisfaction

According to Table 3, this hypothesis suggests that there is a positive relationship between the Relate Experience and Customer Satisfaction. The hypothesis path was positive and significant with ($\beta= 0.099$, $t= 2.098$, $p= 0.036$). In conclusion, the discussion for this hypothesis is accepted.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study is to find out more about the main components of experiential marketing and see how it relates to customer satisfaction towards a quick service restaurant in Sabak Bernam, Selangor. The study also seeks to expand the current understanding of how experiential marketing affects customer satisfaction. Through the study, it was found that two of the five components of experience-based marketing, namely sense experience and relate experience, have a significant effect on customer satisfaction toward quick service restaurant in Sabak Bernam, Selangor. As a result, this branch needs to pay more attention to these aspects and find ways to improve them so that users can do better and be more satisfied. The statistical association of sense experience with customer satisfaction is indicated by a p-value of 0.00. This result is consistent with Tian (2022) past study, where this scholar asserts that sensory experience has the greatest influence on customer satisfaction because it allows customers to gather information through their perception of the five senses. A positive and significant relationship between sensory experience and user satisfaction has also been reported in other research by Wahyuningtyas et al. (2017), Lu et al. (2008), Lin et al. (2009), Lin, Hsu, and Tsai (2011), and Alkilani, Ling, and Abzakh (2013). They argue that sensory experiences can serve as differentiators, motivators, and value creators. Amin and Tarun (2019) also found comparable results in terms of senses, showing that restaurant lighting and aesthetics have a significant impact on customer satisfaction.

The relationship between feel experience and customer satisfaction has a p-value of 0.848, which indicates that it is not statistically significant. Alkilani, Ling, and Abzakh (2013) found a positive correlation between customer satisfaction and taste experience. They argue that customer emotions are strongest when they arise during consumption. Customer satisfaction is strongly influenced by the taste experience, according to a different study by Tangkuman et al. (2020). They claim that customers will naturally feel satisfied with the service they receive if they have a positive mindset towards the business. In addition, the study by Wahyuningtyas et al. (2017) found that friendly service increases consumer happiness and satisfaction.

The relationship between customer satisfaction and think experience has a p-value of 0.759, which is not statistically significant. This finding is consistent with previous studies where customers actually do not have original thoughts about a brand (Lin, Hsu & Tsai, 2011; Alkilani, Ling & Abzakh, 2013). The study of Wahyuningtyas et al. (2017) found that experience is important for consumer satisfaction because it may be obtained from businesses through advertising and little knowledge on their website. Meanwhile, Tian (2022) also supports the importance of customer happiness on the thinking experience. According to the finding, act experience has a p-value of 0.183. This shows that it has no significant effect on customer satisfaction. These results are in line with previous studies by Alkilani et al. (2013) that the act revealed is not one of the factors that can affect customer happiness. On the other hand, Wahyuningtyas et al. (2017) found that customer satisfaction is significantly influenced by acting experience, but this influence depends on the extent to which customers enjoy the company's services. Meanwhile, Tian (2022) claimed that if a business succeeds in changing the mentality and lifestyle of customers through its products or services, the experience of acting should be significant in influencing customer happiness. The correlation between relate experience and customer satisfaction has a p-value of 0.036, which indicates a relationship. This result is consistent with a previous study by Wahyuningtyas et al. (2017), who concluded that customers are more likely to be satisfied and return to a business or restaurant when they

have had a memorable experience. But according to Tian (2022), experience does not affect consumer satisfaction much. In addition, experience is not one of the factors that can influence customer satisfaction as claimed by Alkilani et al. (2013). On the other hand, experiences, which allow customers to develop through sensations, feelings, cognitions, and actions, have a great impact on customer satisfaction (Kustini, 2011).

CONCLUSION

In brief, this study found that sense experience and relate experience have a positive effect on customer satisfaction while emotional, cognitive, and behavioural experiences have less effect on it. Because it allows customers to gather information through their perceptions of the five senses (i.e. touch, hearing, sight, smell, and taste), sense experience have the greatest impact on customer satisfaction. Conversely, a positive relate experience occurs when customers are satisfied with the service they receive and develop a positive impression of the business, which motivates them to return. However, these three factors do not greatly affect the level of customer satisfaction with the service of this quick service restaurant in Sabak Bernam, Selangor.

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