

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**THE INFLUENCE OF
OPERATIONAL ATTRIBUTES,
MODERATING EFFECT OF SOCIAL
MEDIA MARKETING ON
CUSTOMERS ACCEPTANCE AND
BUSINESS PERFORMANCE
TOWARDS MOBILE FOOD TRUCK
BUSINESS RESILIENCE**

HAIRUL NIZWAN BIN ABD MAJID

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ABSTRACT

Due to the rise of popularity pertaining to mobile food truck businesses and in line with the challenging food business realm, the efforts to improve the business performance and resiliency demand a more comprehensive view on the influence of mobile food truck operational attributes towards customer acceptance. However, without prejudice, there is still lack of studies specifically looking at the causes and effects of mobile food truck attributes, mediating effect of customers' acceptance, and business performance toward its business resiliency. In fact, there is still no study centrally looking at the moderating effect of social media marketing on customers' acceptance of the mobile food truck businesses. Therefore, this study empirically investigates the influence of mobile food truck operational attributes and the moderating effect of the social network marketing toward customer acceptance, business performance and its resiliency. Utilizing a self-administered questionnaire survey, 314 usable responses were collected from mobile food truck operators across all states in Peninsular Malaysia. Employing various statistical analyses, including Multivariate Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) via Partial Least Square (PLS-SEM), the study revealed some valuable insights. The findings demonstrated that operational attributes with its underlying dimensions such as menu, service quality, servicescape and nature of business not only influences the customer acceptance, but it acts as a precursor or predictor of the mobile food truck business resiliency. Customer acceptance also manifestly determines the mobile food truck business resiliency. Additionally, customer acceptance played a significant mediating role in the intended relationship between mobile food truck operational attributes; menu, service quality, servicescape and nature of business toward its business performance. Another remarkable finding is that social media marketing played a moderating role in the relationship between menu, service quality and servicescape and customers' acceptance. The findings also proved a convergence between the Resource-Based View (RBV), Social Capital Theory, and Dynamic Capability Theory that is applicable to provide a viable and useful theoretical framework for examining mobile food truck business resiliency. Thus, the overall findings, without any doubt, contribute to the significance to the academic and the practical perspectives. The academic aspect is generated through the body of knowledge and theoretical contributions, while the practical contribution, without an exception, is closely connected with the mobile food truck operators, consumers, non-government organizations, and the relevant authorities.

Key words: Menu, service quality, servicescape, nature of business, customers' acceptance, business performance, and mobile food truck business resilience.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

The starting entry point of every thesis is to have a good introduction to the background of the subject matter being investigated. This matter is to clarify the importance and the need of undertaking the study. With that, the background of the study touches on the general overview of the food truck industry as well as its development is highlighted in the first section of this chapter. The food truck related issues as a central focus of this study from the vantage point of Malaysian market and the gaps of the study is discussed in the problem statement section. This is followed by the identification of the research objectives and research questions with the subsequent section addressing the theoretical and practical significance of the study. The scope of the study dealing with the boundary of the research is then explained and followed by the operational definitions of the key terms which wrap up this first chapter.

1.2 Background of the Study

When talking about resilience, it is normally a multi-faceted phenomenon which covers the environmental and personal factors that are dealing with the ability to expand, mature and enhance the competency to face every adverse circumstances. In the environmental context, resilience is the ability of natural systems to recover from disturbances and to tolerate or adapt to changing climate. According to Sakmar et al. (2011), it may involve biological abnormalities or environmental challenges in either ecological, economic, socio-cultural, climate change, water availability or natural resource flows, including waste streams. On a personal perspective, a person could be classified as resilience when he/ she is able to face difficult experiences and rise above them with ease. Resilience is not a rare ability and in reality, it is found in the average individual and it can be learned and developed by virtually anyone. Scholars like Coutu (2002), Sutcliffe & Vogus (2003) and Youssef & Luthans (2005) posited that people who are resilient share many characteristics and have had some similar protective experiences while people who are not resilient may have difference characteristics and