

Causes Influencing Consumer Purchasing Satisfaction: A Study on Street food at Penang, Malaysia

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Mohamad Zefry Suhaimi Ahmad Suraini

Nur Syahira Bibit*

Wan Siti Nor Azma Abd. Aziz

Mas Affandy Mashuri

Siti Rohimi Mohamed Apendi

Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Pulau Pinang, Permatang Pauh
nursyahira94@uitm.edu.my

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Abstract

Penang is renowned for its unique history, thriving culture, exotic flora and fauna, rugged terrain, and numerous ethnic groupings. It is famous as "The Pearl of the Orient." Penang is Asia's most popular tourist destination and is recognized as a "food heaven," Street food sellers serve some of the world's best street food. This study aims to look into the factors influencing consumer satisfaction with street food purchases in Penang, Malaysia. This study uses a quantitative approach; the samples comprise customers who bought street food in Penang. This study used a quantitative methodology and a convenience sampling method, and the samples consisted of Penang customers who buy street food. The sample size was calculated using the G*Power app's estimation that the appropriate sample size for using simple linear regression is 129 respondents. The research reveals a positive relationship between food price, quality, hygiene, word of mouth, and consumer purchasing satisfaction. This research provides readers with extensive knowledge about consumer satisfaction that they can apply to their decision-making while purchasing food. The results of this study will hopefully help street food vendors identify possible surveys to market their stalls to become more popular and seek to meet client demand to optimize their revenue.

Keywords:

Food Price, food quality, food hygiene, word of mouth, and consumer purchasing satisfaction

1 Introduction

Street food is prepared meals and beverages sold by hawkers in public areas such as streets and sidewalks (Othman & Dawood, 2020). Street food is an integral element of the informal activities that take place in Malaysia. In destination marketing and development, food has frequently become a primary lure (Anderson et al. 2017). Food is a significant tourist attraction in many constructions and improvements, which is critical to the guest experience (Henderson, 2009). Street Food is a rising industry component, and vacation locations compete in promoting it (Raji et al., 2018). Thus, understanding customer purchase satisfaction is crucial in advertising management (Kotler, 2018), and consumer purchasing satisfaction supports all market activities in a food and beverage scenario. In the twenty-first century, the resuscitation of the street food sector by luring consumers, mainly local and foreign tourists, is critical for profit generation. Despite potential growth, street food has received little attention in street food studies. As competition in the restaurant industry heats up, consumers' expectations for service quality rise, making providing reasonable meal prices, quality, and hygiene a crucial survival strategy. (Seo & n.d, 2021).

Trip Advisor Penang is noted for its distinct history, vibrant culture, exotic flora and fauna, daring landscape, and diverse ethnic groups. It is known as "The Pearl of the Orient." Penang is Asia's most popular tourist destination and is known as a "food heaven," Street food vendors serve some of the world's best street food. According to The Cable News Network (CNN), the region provides a diverse and exotic blend of Malay, Chinese, and Indian cuisine, known as the city's ethnic mix. The town is regarded as having the best street food in Asia. Penang began the new year by being named one of the 22 best tourist destinations in the world for 2022 (The Star Online, 2022). Relative to the news strait times (2020), Penang is the only Asian representative on CNN Visit's list of "Where to Travel 2022, the Best Places to Visit." They also mention that Penang is rich in varied cultures, food, history, and other tourist-friendly features.

Penang stands out as a must-visit location for a variety of reasons, including the fact that, according to its website, Penang hosts the largest food festival in the state, the Penang International Food Festival (PIFF). Additionally, Penang's famous culinary scene is garnering attention from all over the world. Conde Nast Traveler recognized Penang as Asia's Next Great Foodie City in 2018. In 2019, CNA Luxury highlighted Penang's expanding fine dining scene, while Penang was named one of the Top 30 Cities in the World for Street Food by Mirror Online.

Food hygiene, price, quality, and word of mouth are used as the factors in this study to help reach this goal. This study was carried out to identify the factors that influence consumers' purchasing decisions when it comes to street food in Penang. To boost customers' purchase satisfaction toward street food in Penang and to increase Penang's worth as a street food attraction spot, it is crucial to understand customers' perceptions of street food and their demands.

As we all know, prices rose before the onset of pandemic-related lockdowns in early 2020, causing all food to be rationed. According to the online news, The Edge Markets

(2022) Food price index grew 6.1% and remained the primary contributor to the increase in inflation during June 2022. In June, for example, the average price of processed chicken was RM10.02 per kilogram, up from RM8.55 a year earlier. If the problem persists, it will have an impact on both all food sellers and customers.

On the other hand, food hygiene and quality are critical in influencing consumers purchasing satisfaction. Adequate food safety is crucial to protecting people's health and well-being, supporting economic development, and enhancing livelihoods. There are many cases involving food. For example, as reported by Malay Mail on July 25, 2019, 85 people were sent to the hospital owing to food poisoning. Then, according to the online publication Sinar Harian, 42 more people would be hospitalized due to food poisoning on September 9, 2020. That is why authorities must monitor food handling and quality so that such incidents do not occur again.

Furthermore, social media (Socmed) has become important to people in the Mordent world. Over 90% of adolescents have at least one social media account, and their social media presence is growing (Kucharczuk et al., 2020). Our social environment is one component that influences what and why we eat. The use of social media has been found to affect how consumers look for and choose products and services. It isn't easy to navigate social media without seeing photographs and videos of food, recipes, or postings from family and friends describing what they have eaten or plan to eat. The vast amount of information available through mass media may cause consumers to lose trust or become confused (Simeone & Scarpato, 2020). That is why we must understand that all of the criteria listed above significantly impact consumers' purchase habits when it comes to street food in Penang.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Overview of consumers purchasing satisfaction

Purchase satisfaction or behavior is a type of decision-making that investigates why consumers buy a particular brand (Shah et al. 2012). Customers' purchasing habits are a complicated process. Purchase satisfaction is typically linked to consumer intentions, perceptions, and attitudes. Purchase satisfaction is essential in a consumer's ability to access and evaluate a product. According to (Mirabi et al., 2015). Price, as well as perceived quality and value, can affect purchase satisfaction. Furthermore, buyers are influenced by internal or external motives during the purchasing process. (Mohamad et al., 2021) Classify purchasing satisfaction into three types: repurchase intention, revisit intention, and word-of-mouth intention. Saber et al. (2020) have extensively discussed the concept of tourist purchasing satisfaction in food-related tourism studies.

An interesting finding from these studies is that the antecedents of purchasing satisfaction are strong predictors of tourist destination attitudes, such as perceived trust and satisfaction. Other essential aspects influencing purchasing satisfaction are food hygiene, price, and quality (Seo & Lee 2021), who also noted that Consumer satisfaction entails purchasing a product again or recommending it to others based on the

customer's experience. Repurchase intention, in particular, relates to an individual's decision to buy from the same organization again, taking into account their situation.

2.2 Food Price

When a buyer buys a product, one of the most important factors is the price, which significantly impacts purchase intention or purchasing behavior. (Chang et al., 2020). Consumers' intentions to buy a specific product may be influenced by how they consider transparent pricing high or low. Furthermore, consumers typically compare the prices paid by other customers and the prices charged by different food vendors to ensure that fairness is applied among them, as justice affects consumer impression and, ultimately, buy intention (Razak, Nirwanto & Treatment, 2016). It tremendously impacts customer purchasing intentions (Chang et al., 2020). According to conventional economic theory, clients frequently base their purchasing decisions on the lowest price. In most circumstances, the consumer's opinion of whether the provided price is low or high influences their purchase behavior. The price-purchase relationship divides customers into groups: those who compare a high-priced item to a lower price and those who decline a promotion or reduction if the stated price is unjustified (Huang et al., 2014). Customers, in the case of street food, make sure that they get the most value for money by comparing meal costs (Pham et al., 2018).

Hypothesis 1: Food Price has a significant influence on Consumers purchasing satisfaction with Street food in Penang

2.3 Food Quality

Food quality is one of the critical factors influencing consumer satisfaction. However, less attention has been paid to identifying street food's quality dimensions (Nguyen et al., 2018). Without understanding the quality of street food, it isn't easy to develop specific strategic methods for sustained performance. Furthermore, recognizing which aspect of service quality is more significant is necessary to assist marketers and owners who need to maximize efficiency and profitability while working with limited resources. As a result, there is a need to discover the critical dimensions and service quality features that consumers value while evaluating their street food experience. Regardless of the style of food service, there is general agreement that food quality is an essential aspect of restaurant experiences (Kim et al., 2010).

Furthermore, food freshness, optimum food temperature, presentation, and healthful selections are all critical aspects of food quality. Food hawkers must provide good food quality because positive responses from tourists will considerably improve their attitude and behavioral intention to return to the destination and recommend it to others (Atikahambar et al., 2018). According to Al-Tit (2015) and Arlanda and Suroso (2018), food quality influences consumer satisfaction. Furthermore, when customers plan their purchasing decision, food quality is the first thing that comes to mind.

Hypothesis 2: Food Quality has a significant influence on Consumers purchasing satisfaction on street food in Penang

2.4 Food Hygiene

Food hygiene is vital in food manufacturing and street food preparation, especially in developing nations where foodborne sickness and death are common (Prevorseket al., 2021). Most street food consumers rely on food sellers to cook and prepare food for them, and their hygiene practices directly impact them (Calopes et al., 2017). However, because of the limited accessibility of street food operations, customers believe that street food poses a high food safety risk. According to Abraham et al. (2019), street food hygiene comprises the cleanliness of the food station, workstation, utensils, pottery, and food vendors hygiene. The World Health Organization (WHO) effectively defined five critical factors of food safety: keeping food clean, separating raw and cooked food, properly cooking food, maintaining nutrition at acceptable temperatures, and using safe raw materials and clean water. Inadequate food storage, poor personal hygiene, cross-contamination of raw and processed food, improper heating and reheating procedures, cooking food incorrectly, exposing food to too much sunlight without covering it, using food additives and banned hazardous chemicals, and selling expired products are just a few of the significant perceived street food safety risks among consumers (Mahiranissa & Hudrasyah, 2015). According to Shafiee et al. (2017), authorities must enforce the implementation of training and regulations for street food vendors. Aside from a lack of awareness, socio-demographics, vending experience, water resources, personal hygiene, and cultural traditions in food handling play a significant role in this scenario (Tuglo et al., 2021).

Hypothesis 3: Food Hygiene has a significant influence on Consumers purchasing satisfaction on street food in Penang

2.5 Word of mouth

Word-of-mouth communication (WOM) is considered to influence consumer purchases WOM substantially is thought to significantly affect customer buying decisions by offering meaningful and credible information to consumers (S. Seo & Jang, 2021). According to Konuk (2019) research, WOM is "informal, person-to-person communication between a perceived non-commercial communicator and a receiver regarding a brand, a product, an organization, or a service." A communication method allows people to communicate knowledge about an offering, which can either promote or dissuade potential buyers from purchasing. In reality, private sources of information, such as referrals from family and friends, are more dependable than commercial advertising media and hence are more likely to influence a customer's favorable or unfavorable attitude toward a company (Chua et al., 2020). It has been discovered that word-of-mouth affects several different factors, including consumer choice, switching services, purchase decision, perception about the product or service, and brand choice facilitation for the consumer (Kundu & Rajan, 2016). It may play important mediating and modifying roles between pleasure with each type of cuisine and word of mouth (WOM) about the food in a place. Understanding the functions of integrated food satisfaction can assist marketers in developing effective strategies for marketing the

food sector industry (Konuk, 2019). Word-of-mouth (WOM) stands out among the many forms of advertising, word-of-mouth (WOM) stands out because consumers believe it comes from impartial third parties and is more likely relevant to their needs (Kundu & Rajan, 2016). Oluwafemi and Dastane (2016) say that Word of Mouth is a way for participants to suggest, recommend, or not recommend a product or service. This creates feelings of attachment or affiliation for a product or service that are stronger than those for a competitor. As a result, a consumer sees more value in the product and chooses to buy it.

Hypothesis 4: Word Of Mouth has a significant influence on Consumers purchasing satisfaction with street food in Penang

3 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Research design is the method of selecting a solution to the problem of a research project. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013), the research design is a plan for collecting, measuring, and analyzing data pertinent to the research question. This study uses a quantitative method to study causes influencing consumer-purchasing satisfaction: an analysis of street food in Penang, Malaysia. Penang was chosen as the study location because it is renowned for its street food. Several sections of the questionnaire inquired about food price, hygiene, quality, and word of mouth. This questionnaire requires less time to complete than the open-ended version. The purpose of this study, which is a field experiment, is to investigate the cause-and-effect relationship. It can be assumed that the study was conducted in an unplanned environment with minimal researcher intervention.

3.2 Population and Sample

This study would use a convenience sample method to target people who stayed in Penang, Malaysia. Several respondents were required as a sample size. For the first step, a pilot study was conducted as a pre-test on 20 respondents to test whether the questionnaire was valid to be given to respondents. According to G*power (2022), the appropriate sample size for simple linear regression is 129 respondents. Due to some limitations, respondents were involved in answering the questionnaire to get responses regarding the study. Therefore, the research will randomly choose random people in Penang. The questionnaire can contribute information to this study.

3.3 Research Instrument

The questionnaire will be formatted as a Google form with clear instructions and a polished appearance. Additionally, there will be spaces on the questionnaire where respondents can quickly check the circles from the Likert Scale that they prefer to use in place of a process or enter numbers, which can occasionally be confusing when there are many questions. As a result, the questions are clear and straightforward to eliminate any ambiguities. This questionnaire is divided into 6 parts. The first part is about the

demographic of the respondent. The next part is about the dependent, and independent variables studied.

Table 1: Instrumentation

Variables	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Food price	5	0.844
Food quality	5	0.821
Food hygiene	5	0.909
Words of Mouth	5	0.874
Consumers purchasing satisfaction	4	0.821
Total	24	0.962

3.4 Data Collection

As for this study, the proposed preliminary data are collected based on the variables determined at the beginning of the proposal. The result can be described as the first-hand sources collected by ourselves. On the other hand, we also use secondary sources from websites, the internet, data collection from the government, etc. The data collection method is done through an online survey. The questionnaire is made online using Google Forms.

This study can be described as a descriptive study, which is interested in telling the characteristics of a population or phenomenon. It has been implemented to be able to describe the causes influencing consumer purchasing satisfaction in the population of people who stayed in Penang.

4 Findings

4.1 Reliability Analysis

A reliability test was carried out to verify the authenticity of the questionnaires. Consequently, for this analysis, all the variables are valid. The magnitude of the Alpha of Cronbach is seen in the table below. The outcome of all variables is 0.962. Cronbach's alpha values for independent and dependent variables were obtained through SPSS. On top of that, all the values in the measurement surpassed the minimum acceptability reliability coefficient values of 0.6. Therefore, no item was deleted.

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha

Variables	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Food price	5	0.844
Food quality	5	0.821
Food hygiene	5	0.909
Words of Mouth	5	0.874
Consumers purchasing satisfaction	4	0.821
Total	24	0.962
N= 130		

4.2 Demographic Profile of Respondent

Table 3 : Frequency of Respondents

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)	
Gender	Female	73	55.3
	Male	59	44.7
Age	18-30 years	73	55.3
	30-40 years	56	42.4
	40-50 years	1	0.8
	50 and above	2	1.5
Marital Status	Single	68	51.5
	Married	64	48.5
Level Income	Below RM1500	78	59.1
	RM1501- RM2500	36	27.3
	RM2501 - RM3500	11	8.3
	RM4501 and above	7	5.3
Total	N: 132	100%	

Table 4.2 indicates the involvement of the respondent's gender, age, marital status, and level income of respondents. As stated in the table, the majority of the respondent is male (N=73), 55.3%, while for the female participants, the recorded data is 44.7 % (N=59). The age frequency of all respondents is determined. 55.4 % (N=73) between 18-30 years is the highest recorded range. From 30-40 years of age, 56 % (N=42.4) were registered, and 0.8 % (N=1) were reported from 40-50 years, assuming the lowest incidence recorded and 1.5 % (N=2) from the range of 50 and above. According to the data, those aged 18-30 are more interested in purchasing street food. Of respondents who have a level income below RM 1500, 59 % (N=78) are more likely to buy food from street food vendors. This table also indicates the involvement of the respondent's marital status and the majority number of respondents. Single (N=68), 52.3% while for married participants, the data recorded is 47.7% (N=62). According to the data

presented in the table that is located above, it is clear that respondents who are not married had a greater propensity to purchase food from vendors on the street.

4.3 Regression Analysis

There were four hypotheses to be analyzed using regressions analysis in this study, which is as follows.

H1: There is a significant relationship between food prices towards consumers purchasing satisfaction with street food.

H2: There is a significant relationship between food qualities towards consumers purchasing satisfaction with street food.

H3: There is a significant relationship between food hygiene towards consumers purchasing satisfaction with street food.

H4: There is a significant relationship between word of mouth towards consumers purchasing satisfaction with street food.

Table 5: Results of regressions analysis of food price with consumers purchasing satisfaction

Variables	Standardized Coefficients Beta (β)	R2	Adj. R2	R2 Change	F-Change
Food Price	.849	.721	.719	.721	330.552
Food Quality	.865	.748	.747	.748	380.927
Food hygiene	.913	.833	.832	.833	640.515
Word of mouth	.850	.723	.721	.723	334.541

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

The hypotheses was tested using a regression analysis with the variables included in the following food price affected consumers purchasing satisfaction on Street food. Mainly, this research aimed to determine if and to what extent food prices, food quality, food hygiene and Word of Mouth affect consumer satisfaction. The result shows that the food price clarify 72.1% ($R^2 = .721$, F-change = 330.552, $p < .001$) of the variance in consumers purchasing satisfaction. Its demonstrated that the food price significantly contributed to the consumers purchasing satisfaction. The food quality factors manage to explain only 86.5% ($R^2 = .748$, F-change = 380.927, $p < .001$) of the variance in the consumers purchasing satisfaction. The food quality was found significantly and positively influence consumers purchasing satisfaction. For food hygiene, result shows that food hygiene was able to clear up 83.3% ($R^2 = .833$, F-change = 640.515, $p < .001$) of the variance in the consumers purchasing satisfaction. The results indicate that food hygiene has a significant impact on consumers purchasing satisfaction. Food hygiene was found to significantly and positively influence consumers buying happiness $\beta = .913$, $p < .001$. It can be concluded food hygiene has a huge impact on consumers purchasing

satisfaction. Lastly, as stated by the table, word of mouth was able to collect 72.3% ($R^2 = .723$, $F\text{-change} = 334.541$, $p < .001$) of the variance in the consumers purchasing satisfaction. The results assume that word of mouth has a positive impact on consumers purchasing satisfaction, referring to the value $\beta = .850$, $p < .001$ in the table.

4.4 Summary of Hypotheses

The hypothesis' results are represented in Table 4.5.1, which is derived from earlier statistical analysis results

Table6: Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	β	p-value	Results
H1: There is a significant relationship between food prices towards consumers purchasing satisfaction with street food.	.849	$p < .001$	Accepted
H2: There is a significant relationship between food qualities towards consumers purchasing satisfaction with street food.	.865	$p < .001$	Accepted
H3: There is a significant relationship between food hygiene towards consumers purchasing satisfaction on street food.	.913	$p < .001$	Accepted
H4: There is a significant relationship between word of mouth towards consumers purchasing satisfaction on street food.	.850	$p < .001$	Accepted

5 Conclusion

It has been established that consumers' expertise with food price data can influence their tendency to buy street food. Many consumers have come to terms with Penang street food being cheap, which has influenced their purchase decisions. Consumers who agree that street food prices in Penang are reasonable may be less likely to make impulse purchases. Since street food costs less than food from restaurants, more people will be enticed to try it. It was also noted that the prices of Penang's street foods are in line with market expectations, which implies that the cost of food manufacturing in Penang is relatively consistent across vendors. Last, the price of the street food in Penang street food is worth the money, which will bring in more customers because happy customers would return.

Respondents also agreed that Penang street food sellers use fresh ingredients, demonstrating that the components' freshness is affecting consumers' choices of whether or not to purchase a product. Aside from that, they agree that Penang's street food smells great. A pleasant aroma is one way to entice people and make them want to try the meal. Customers will not hesitate or second-guess themselves when it comes to purchasing from a street food vendor that serves the food with a suitable portion size

because the food is valued and worth the money to buy. When it comes to food presentation, many people think that the visual appeal of Penang street food is attractive. This demonstrates that Penang street food has a good image in its production. Finally, yet importantly, the food served at the street stalls in Penang is safe and healthy to eat. This demonstrates that Penang cuisine is suited to everyone, including those who are dieting, as it is still safe and suitable for them to consume the food.

The findings of the survey indicate that the food sold on the streets of Penang is safe to eat. Hence, this should encourage customers to purchase food from the streets without any concerns. Consumers look at the food and the vendors themselves as having a high level of self-hygiene, which indicates a high level of food quality. Sellers selling street food in Penang are clean and wear appropriate apparel. This demonstrates that all vendors know how to handle food properly. The next responder agrees that the street food sellers in Penang utilize clean tableware (cutlery, cups, plates, and bowls). Thus, we can conclude that all of the equipment that is used is brand new and will prevent cross-contamination from occurring. They all agree, in the end, that people who sell food should wear clean clothes, hats, and gloves. Because customers will have, the idea, thanks to the use of the item that the food being sold by the vendor is going to be maintained and very hygienic, customers will not be concerned about being ill from things like food poisoning and other similar illnesses.

This demonstrates that social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok, and others significantly impact street food because the respondents all agreed that they are influenced by word of mouth through these platforms. Respondents are put in a natural position to share information about successful items in social media thanks to the power of social media, which does not require any force. The people selling food on the street will automatically gain from this, or you might think of it as a free advertisement on their behalf. Most respondents promote the food stalls they frequent while praising the quality of Penang's street cuisine and telling my friends how great it is. The last respondent is willing to recommend family and friends to purchase street food in Penang, indicating that they had a positive experience buying it in Penang. Based on the data collected, we can conclude that most respondents had a positive experience regarding the food's price, hygiene, and quality. In addition, they will recommend Penang street food to those who seek my advice. This indicates that they had a positive experience buying street food in Penang.

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