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THE IMPACT OF UTILITARIAN AND HEDONIC VALUE ON SATISFACTION AND FOOD TRUCK'S VISIT INTENTION

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of food truck businesses has transformed the contemporary food service landscape, particularly in urban settings. This study examines the influence of utilitarian and hedonic values on customer satisfaction and revisit intention within the context of food truck dining in Malaysia. Data were collected from 592 food truck customers using a combination of intercept and online survey methods. The analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with Partial Least Squares (PLS) to test the proposed relationships. The findings reveal that both utilitarian value (functional benefits such as convenience and price) and hedonic value (experiential and emotional aspects) significantly influence customer satisfaction and visit intention. Furthermore, customer satisfaction is found to have a strong positive effect on revisit intention, highlighting its mediating role in consumer decision-making. These results suggest that food truck operators should balance functional efficiency with engaging customer experiences to enhance patronage. This study contributes to the growing literature on mobile food services by providing empirical evidence from an emerging market context. The findings offer practical implications for entrepreneurs and policymakers in designing strategies to sustain and expand the food truck industry, particularly in attracting younger consumers and supporting small business development.

Keywords: Hedonic & Utilitarian Values, Visit Intention, Satisfaction, Food-Truck, Eating out, Entrepreneurs

1. INTRODUCTION

As it fits well with eating-out habits of Malaysian society, the food truck phenomenon has hit the nation all the way to colleges, office buildings and roadsides to offer a brand new and creative way of eating out. The attraction of food truck dining in Malaysia has started since 2014 (Mokhtar, Othman, Arsat, & Ariffin, 2018) and the numbers keep on growing. According to the chairman of Malaysian Food Truck Association (MAFTA), Datuk Mohamad Zaini Md Taha, there is 820 food truck operator registered as members nationwide and more than 1000 licenses have been issued for food trucks in Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya alone (Arikiah, 2019; "MAFTA wants fixed guideline for food trucks," 2019; Metro News, 2018).

Realizing the lucrative prospect of the food truck industry, Malaysian government agencies have provided assistance

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and encouragement to entrepreneurs to run the food truck business. Selangor took the first step in introducing a license to allow the operation of the food business with this concept (Naj, 2017). Furthermore, the state governments in Malaysia have rolled out measures to help food truck businesses and even appoints managers at each local council, tasked with managing food truck operation, business hours, location, movement and adherence to the guideline (Naj, 2017). Additionally, the Malaysian government has allocated RM120 million as an easy loan specifically to food truck operators through a number of designated banks and government bodies (Arikiah, 2019).

With the mushrooming of the food truck operators, the competition is becoming intense. The competition is not only among the food truck operators, but the food truck owners also need to compete with other food and beverage establishments such as traditional restaurants, fast-food restaurants, and online food ordering, another emerging trend in the food and beverage industry. As the food truck phenomenon continues to expand, the issues of customer value that contribute towards its business sustainability remain under research. The present study aims to understand the eating out behavior by examining the relationship between utilitarian and hedonic values, satisfaction, and consumers' intention to visit food trucks.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Food Trucks

The food truck business is considered unique compared to conventional food and beverage establishment. They operate using large vehicles equipped with cooking and selling food and moving from place to place daily. The cost of setting up a business is lower than opening a restaurant because the food operator only needs to open a kitchen for food preparation and selling the food items. A food truck is also used for selling ready-made food such as beverages, cookies, bread, and other food items. It seems that selling thru food-truck is a good option to access the target market.

The importance and increasing growth of the food truck businesses have attracted the attention of researchers, leading to several studies in this area. Among the area studied are the profile of food truck consumer (Valente, Stangarlin-Fiori, Seiscentos, de Souza, & Opolski Medeiros, 2019), performance efficiency (Alfiero, Lo Giudice, & Bonadonna, 2017), social media usage (Adibah, Ishak, Ghazali, Ungku, & Abidin, 2018; Anenberg & Kung, 2015), food safety (Dolberth Dardin, Stangarlin-Fiori, Olmedo, Serafim, & Opolski Medeiros, 2019; Valente et al., 2019) and dining experience (Mokhtar, Othman, Arsat, & Ariffin, 2018; Shin, Kim, & Severt, 2019). Prior literature are more about understanding the operation of the food truck business. Although there has been rising interest in consumer perception on food truck dining behavior, there have been limited studies that analyze the factors influencing food truck visit intention, except for the empirical work done by Yoon and Chung (2018) investigating the influence of consumer attitude on visit intention and Shin et al. (2019) examining the consumer value and service quality on visit intention. Due to the increasing competition between food traders, the need to investigate the influence of food truck visit intentions is essential, to understand customer eating-out behavior. Food truck operators need to know, understand and care about customer's decisions in food purchasing and include value in their business offerings.

2.2. Hedonic and Utilitarian Value, Customer Satisfaction and Visit Intention

Food truck operators must create and maintain a loyal customer base to survive in today's intense competition. Hence, understanding the value that drives the customer to choose food truck dining relative to another alternative is crucial. Factors that drive a customer to make a purchase are not only for functional reason, the elements of fun in the purchasing process also play a role. Recent studies have highlighted the importance of utilitarian and hedonic values in retail and consumer behavior (Vieira, Santini, & Araujo, 2018).

Hedonic Values

Hedonic values refer to values that bring customers joy and happiness (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994). Food truck dining experience in Malaysia is unique as it is widely famous as the perfect hangout spot for the customer (Naj, 2017). In fact, more and more food truck spots are popping in Malaysia. The local council has provided spot specifically for food trucks to gather and operate their business in a group. Facilities such as table and chair for dining and entertainment such as live music at the food trucks spot attract the community to enjoy food trucks dining. This situation is unlike food truck practice in other countries where the nature of business is more on providing takeaway meals. It has also become a trend in Malaysia, to book or invite food trucks for events and celebrations as one of the main attractions to attract participation from the public. The element of positive emotional responses such as enjoyment and pleasure from the food truck dining experience can be obtained from visually attractive and unique food presentation, stimulating, cheerful, and entertaining atmosphere at the food truck hotspots.

Utilitarian Values

Utilitarian value on the hand is based on task-related and rational consumption behavior (Babin et al., 1994). Customers who are concerned about the ingredient used in their food purchase can also be included in this category. Utilitarian purchases are more focused and functional oriented (Izquierdo-Yusta, Gómez-Cantó, Pelegrin-Borondo, & Martínez-Ruiz, 2018). The value is derived from functional benefits such as health benefits, monetary saving, convenience, and efficient service (Rintamäki, Kanto, Kuusela, & Spence, 2006). Accordingly, food truck dining is considered to be the best solution for people who are looking for fast service, competitive prices, right meals, and eating convenience.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction for this study refers to the evaluation of customer experience of anything associated with food truck dining experience, which meets or exceeds their expectation (Westbrook & Reilly, 1983). Antecedents such as store environment (Marques, Cardoso, & Palma, 2013), store image (Bloemer, Ruyter, De Ruyter, Ruyter, & De Ruyter, 1998), store attitude (Ishida & Taylor, 2012) have been shown to influence customer satisfaction significantly. Customer satisfaction has a significant influence on behavioral intention (Ryu, Han, & Jang, 2010; Xie & Heung, 2012), customer loyalty (Lombart & Louis, 2012) and brand equity (Pappu & Quester, 2006). Prior literature has shown a positive relationship of hedonic and utilitarian value with satisfaction in the context of luxury restaurant (Izquierdo-Yusta et al., 2018) and fast-casual restaurant (Ryu et al., 2010). Hence it can be implied that the positive experience from food truck dining can lead to customer satisfaction.

Visit Intention

Visit intention for this study refers to a stated likelihood to visit food trucks and to recommend to others in the future (Ryu et al., 2010). Positive customer experience on hedonic and utilitarian value is expected to influence their purchasing behavior and lead to an increase in food truck visit intention. Prior research has reported that customer value from purchasing experience has a significant influence on customer satisfaction and visit intention (Kang, Lee, & Namkung, 2018; Ryu et al., 2010). Positive past experience of dining at food trucks can influence the visit intention (Valente et al., 2019). Based on the above explanation, this study proposed the following hypotheses.

- H1: Hedonic value on food truck dining experience is positively related to customer satisfaction.
- H2: Utilitarian value on food truck dining experience is positively related to customer satisfaction.
- H3: Hedonic value on food truck dining experience is positively related to visit intention
- H4: Utilitarian value on food truck dining experience is positively related to visit intention.
- H5: Customer satisfaction is positively related to visit intention

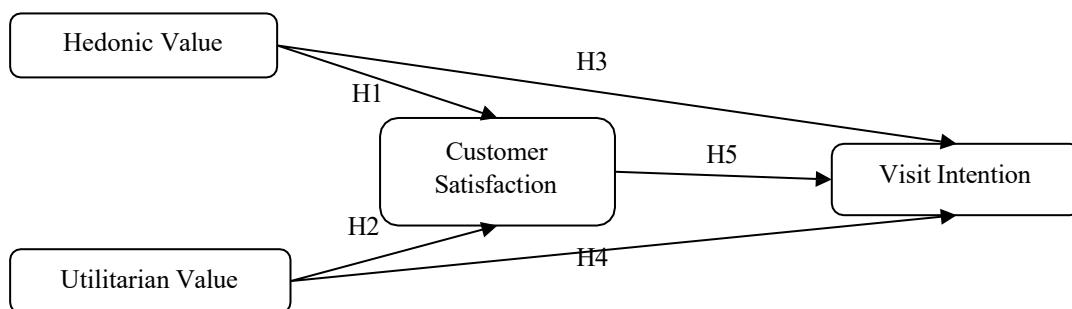


Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Model

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1. Data Collection

The research context of this study is the food truck industry in Malaysia. Food truck operator poses a significant influence in the food and beverages industry. The target population for this study consists of individuals who have experienced eating at food trucks, live and work within Klang Valley. Prior to real data collection, the questionnaire was pre-tested with 30 undergraduate students to provide preliminary evaluation and refinement of the measurement scales. The questionnaires were distributed in the area of Klang Valley through a customer intercept and an online survey.

A total of 592 were recorded and utilized in the data analysis. Out of 592 respondents, 25.2 percent were males, and 74.8 percent were females. The major age group consisted of mostly 20-28, which was 56.1 percent, followed by 15.2% for

those in the age group of 40-49 and 13.9% for the age group less than 20 years. Table 1 summarizes the respondents' profile for this study.

Table 1. Respondents' Profile

Variable	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	149	25.2
	Female	443	74.8
Age	Less than 20	82	13.9
	20 – 29	332	56.1
	30 – 39	72	12.2
	40 – 49	90	15.2
	50 and above	16	2.7
Marital Status	Single	418	70.6
	Married without children	28	4.7
	Married with children	141	23.8
	Widowed/Divorced	5	0.8
Income	Less than RM1,000	302	51
	RM1,000 – RM3,999	95	16
	RM4,000 – RM7,999	83	14
	RM8,000 – RM9,999	41	6.9
	RM10,000 and above	71	12
Education	PMR/SPM	67	11.3
	STPM/Foundation/Matric	53	9
	Diploma	66	11.11
	Degree	324	54.7
	Post-graduate	82	13.9
Work	Private	133	22.5
	Government/Semi	65	11
	Self-employed	30	5.1
	Students	335	56.6
	Not working	29	4.9

SPSS 21 was used to further assess the respondents' involvement, through descriptive analysis. The results reveal that the majority of respondents (60.6%) enjoyed buying food from food trucks, 32.8% were indifference and 6.6% did not enjoy it. The time they usually dine at food-truck is mostly during food truck events (63%) and for dinners (41%). Most of the respondents (78%) indicated that they prefer to visit a group of food trucks rather than just one food truck in an area. Most of the respondents (78%) are also aware and familiar with the food trucks hotspot near their residences.

3.2. Measures

The items of the construct were measured on 5-point Likert scales ranging from 1=strongly disagreed to 5=strongly agree. The constructs were adopted and adapted from the previous literature. Utilitarian and hedonic value measurement was adopted from Park (2004) and Ryu, Han, & Jang (2010). Satisfaction was measured with 4 items adopted from Hsu, Huang, and Swanson (2010). Five items were used to measure purchase intention, which was adopted from Shin, Kim, and Severt (2018) and Ha and Jang (2012).

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Prior to data analysis, the data were analyzed in SPSS 21 and subjected to some standard procedures such as examining for missing values, outlier and data distribution. In total, 592 valid response was obtained. Respondents were asked to assess their food truck dining experience and reason for visiting food trucks. PLS-SEM was used for data analysis. Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt, (2013) commented that PLS-SEM is recommended in the study involving the investigation of the potential significant relationship.

4.1. Measurement Model

The assessment of the measurement model involves examining the relationship between the construct and its items. All the item loading is above 0.7, which is considered acceptable for data analysis. Composite reliability (CR) for this study exceeded the cut-off value of 0.7 and the average variance extracted (AVE) was above 0.5. These results indicate that the four constructs in this study possess a high level of internal consistency reliability. Table 2 summarizes items, AVE and CR for the study.

Table 2. Measurement Model

Construct	Items	Loadings	AVE	CR
Hedonic	HD1	0.853	0.705	0.904
	HD2	0.911		
	HD3	0.877		
	HD4	0.702		
Utilitarian	UT1	0.795	0.646	0.901
	UT2	0.829		
	UT3	0.816		
	UT4	0.776		
	UT5	0.802		
Satisfaction	ST1	0.890	0.757	0.926
	ST2	0.896		
	ST3	0.863		
	ST4	0.828		
Visit Intention	PI1	0.892	0.767	0.943
	PI2	0.882		
	PI3	0.901		
	PI4	0.895		
	PI5	0.806		

Discriminant validity was assessed by examining cross-loadings, Fornell-Larcker criterion, and HTMT criterion of the items. Cross-loading assessment is done by checking the items and making sure that each item loading should exceed the cross-loading by at least 0.10 (Gefen & Straub, 2005). Table 3 verifies the results of cross-loading among the constructs for this study. The results satisfy the Fornell-Larcker criterion, in which the square roots of AVE of all the constructs are higher than the correlation with the other constructs (See Table 4) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The HTMT result fulfills the threshold criteria of HTMT 0.90 (See Table 5). The overall result indicates adequate discriminant validity of the constructs and items tested for this study.

Table 3. Cross-Loading

Items	Hedonic	Utilitarian	Satisfaction	Visit Intention
HD1 Stimulating atmosphere	0.853	0.646	0.493	0.461
HD2 Entertaining atmosphere	0.911	0.623	0.525	0.514
HD3 Cheerful atmosphere	0.877	0.591	0.526	0.490
HD4 Attractive food presentation	0.702	0.536	0.454	0.442
UT1 Fast service	0.544	0.795	0.447	0.393
UT2 Eating convenience	0.568	0.829	0.504	0.478
UT3 Convinient location	0.595	0.816	0.449	0.460
UT4 Good value for money	0.568	0.776	0.500	0.510
UT5 Fast check out	0.594	0.802	0.473	0.433
ST1 Menus meet expectation	0.503	0.527	0.890	0.702
ST2 Satisfied with the menus	0.525	0.530	0.896	0.682
ST3 Enjoyable eating experience	0.582	0.542	0.863	0.654
ST4 Best option for food away from home	0.465	0.461	0.828	0.685
PI1 Planning to visit in the future	0.538	0.522	0.685	0.892
PI2 Intend to visit when eating out	0.518	0.518	0.673	0.882
PI3 Recommend food trucks as an eating place	0.504	0.504	0.688	0.901
PI4 Encourage friends and relatives to visit	0.526	0.527	0.712	0.895
PI5 Meals outside home are consumed at food trucks	0.402	0.419	0.669	0.806

Table 4. Discriminant Validity Using Fornell and Larcker Criterion

Construct	Hedonic	Utilitarian	Satisfaction	Visit Intention
Hedonic	0.839			
Utilitarian	0.714	0.804		
Satisfaction	0.569	0.593	0.870	
Purchase Intention	0.569	0.569	0.783	0.876

Table 5. HTMT Criterion

	Utilitarian	Hedonic	Satisfaction
Hedonic	0.833 (CI.90 (0.79,0.869))		
Satisfaction	0.672 (CI.90 (0.601,0.731))	0.683 (CI.90 (0.619,0.736))	
Visit Intention	0.655 (CI.90 (0.563,0.692))	0.640 (CI.90 (0.568,0.698))	0.863 (CI.90 (0.818,0.898))

In the current study, the measurement of the construct was based on the assessment of food truck customers’ perception. As the data were gathered from the same survey instrument and the same respondents, the possibility of common method bias could be present in the data. To test the presence of common method bias in data, Harman’s single factor test was conducted to determine whether a single factor accounts for a majority of the variance explained (Mackenzie, Podsakoff, & Podsakoff, 2011; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). The test demonstrated that the first single factor accounted for 32% of the variance which was less than the threshold value of 50% (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). Therefore, the common method bias was not viewed as a major issue in this study.

4.2. Structural Model

The structural model is then evaluated to determine whether the theory is empirically verified for the proposed hypotheses. The VIF output for each construct was less than the cut-off threshold of 5, which indicates no issue on collinearity (See Table 6). The conceptual model displays moderate to a large portion of the variance in the endogenous construct as R2 values for satisfaction and visit intention were .41 and .63, respectively. Additionally, blindfolding procedure (with omission distances of 7), yielded positive Q2 values for all endogenous construct, suggesting the predictive relevance of the model proposed in this study (Hair et al., 2013).

The significance of the model’s structural path was examined by running the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS with 5000 samples and 592 cases. Table 7 exhibits the significance testing results encompassing the path coefficient, the standard error, t-value, and the significance level of the analysis. The path coefficient was statistically significant for the effect of hedonic and utilitarian value on satisfaction with a path coefficient of β equal to .354 ($p < .001$) and .34 ($p < .001$) respectively. Thus, both H1 and H2 were supported. As proposed, hedonic and utilitarian values were significantly and positively related visit intention. Utilitarian value ($\beta = .108$, $p < .001$) displayed larger path coefficient compared to hedonic value ($\beta = .099$, $p < .001$). The path coefficient between customer satisfaction and visit intention is $\beta = .66$ ($p < .001$). Thus, H5 was supported.

Table 6. Lateral Collinearity Assessment

	Satisfaction	Visit Intention
Hedonic	2.043	2.256
Utilitarian	2.043	2.24
Satisfaction		1.702

Table 7. Significance Testing Results of the Structural Model Path Coefficients

Hypothesized path	Path Coeff.	Std. Error	t-Value	Decisions
H1 Hedonic → Satisfaction	0.354	0.054	***6.612	Supported
H2 Utilitarian → Satisfaction	0.34	0.058	***5.876	Supported

H3	Hedonic → Visit Intention	0.099	0.044	*2.224	Supported
H4	Utilitarian → Visit intention	0.108	0.044	*2.427	Supported
H5	Satisfaction → Visit Intention	0.66	0.041	***16.203	Supported

Note: *Significant at $p < 0.05$ ($t > 1.96$); **Significant at $p < 0.01$ ($t > 2.57$); ***Significant at $p < 0.001$ ($t > 3.29$)

5. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

The main objective of this study is to examine the influence of hedonic and utilitarian value on customer satisfaction and visit intention in the context of food trucks. Additionally, this study examines the link between customer satisfaction and visit intention. Five hypotheses were tested and supported.

The results of this study show both hedonic and utilitarian value have a significant influence on customer satisfaction with the influence of hedonic value is slightly higher than utilitarian value. The significant positive effect of both value and customer satisfaction is consistent with a study made by Kang, Lee, & Namkung (2018) and Ryu et al. (2010) which indicate the positive benefit provided by both values may lead to customer satisfaction. The finding implies the element of entertainment the product offering is crucial to increase customer satisfaction. This study found both hedonic and utilitarian value significantly influenced visit intentions with the influence of utilitarian value is slightly higher than hedonic value. This result is also consistent with past literature (Ryu et al., 2010). The strong influence of customer satisfaction on visit intention is in line with the study of Espinosa, Ortinau, Krey, and Monahan (2018) and Ryu and Han (2011). Hence, this study reconfirms the significant relationship of hedonic and utilitarian value with satisfaction and visit intention in the retailing industry.

Food truck operator has to consider the utilitarian value in attracting customer to revisit their food truck. Convenience, fair price, fast service should be the key element in their product offering. Food truck operators should also consider providing an entertaining and pleasant eating spot for customers following the preference of the community. Creativity in food presentation, distinctive menus, entertainment, and stimulating dining area may attract more people to choose food trucks when eating out. According to Ha & Jang (2012), customer buying behavior is different when their purchases are driven by hedonic value because buyers will spend more time, enjoying the purchase experience compared to utilitarian value-driven purchases. Food truck operators should emphasize the elements of entertainment and fun to attract the segment of customers who visit food trucks for social purposes and family bonding time. The finding of this study provides an invaluable practical insight which very important for food truck operator in better understanding of consumer preferences and the underlying values which influence their satisfaction and visit intention to the food truck. Additionally, the government agency can also highlight the relevant attributes of food truck dining to the young entrepreneur who intends to pursue the food truck business.

Limitation and Future Research

The main limitation of this study is in terms of generalisability of the finding. The study was conducted in the Klang Valley area. Although the Klang Valley is commonly used in consumer behavior studies in Malaysia, the conceptual framework should be tested in other areas, as the food truck business is widespread throughout the country. Future research can examine other constructs, such as the effectiveness of social media promote food truck, food truck online service, and food truck dining image. Identifying attributes contributing to the food truck dining image can provide a thorough picture of the significance of each attributes to capture more customers to choose food trucks as the main option for eating-out meals.

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