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KEY DRIVERS OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN ONLINE FOOD DELIVERY APPLICATIONS IN KLANG VALLEY: A PILOT STUDY

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Abstract:

In Malaysia, online food delivery applications have transformed the food service industry, especially in Klang Valley due to their quick growth. Past studies have investigated the adoption and usage behavior of OFDA, but few studies have examined the effect of gratification related factors, such as convenience and information quality on satisfaction among OFDA users in Malaysia. This pilot study is based on the Uses and Gratifications Theory to explore the effects of convenience, information quality and customer satisfaction of OFDA users in Klang Valley. To test the preliminary reliability and validity of the instrument of measurement before the main study, a quantitative method using a survey approach was used with 53 respondents by using an online survey. The data were analyzed using SPSS Statistics. Results showed that all constructs of the measurements had acceptable reliability. The independent samples t-test showed that there was no significant difference between males and females in terms of customer satisfaction. The results of Pearson's correlation analysis showed that convenience had a significant positive correlation with customer satisfaction ($r = 0.647$, $p < 0.001$), and information quality had a significant positive correlation with customer satisfaction ($r = 0.668$, p

< 0.001). Based on the limited sample size, the results give initial evidence of the instrument's reliability and the validity of the relationships for further study. The study is a valuable addition to the literature on OFDA because the use of UGT in the context of customer satisfaction, based on convenience and information quality, is extended. The findings are practically useful for OFDA service providers as they can give inputs to improve the usability of the platform and content for the benefit of customers.

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Convenience, Customer Satisfaction, Information Quality,
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Introduction

The use of smartphone apps to place food orders has greatly impacted the food ordering practices of Malaysian people in recent years. With the convenience of ordering food anywhere and anytime through popular food delivery platforms such as GrabFood, Foodpanda, and ShopeeFood, customers can now do so at the mere click of a button. This change has significantly impacted on the way people eat away from home or order food for delivery. Online Food Delivery Applications (OFDAs) have seen a tremendous rise in usage during COVID 19 pandemic. During the lockdowns and social distancing, consumers used these applications a lot to order meals, emphasizing their value on people's food access in tough times. Such growth signifies the need to appreciate the effects of certain OFDA features, such as convenience, on client satisfaction. Since these applications have been part of people's routine, it is essential for companies and researchers to know what makes users happy in order to develop more appealing products. Thus, the economic impact is significant.

Statista (2024) shows that the OFD market in Malaysia is projected to increase to \$3.22 billion in 2025 and grow at a CAGR of 9.3% till 2030, potentially reaching \$5.03 billion. The figures highlight the relevance of OFDAs and how they could transform the food services industry in Malaysia. With the expansion of the market, it is crucial for businesses and researchers to understand the factors that are driving growth. This is crucial to maintain industry growth and keeping up with the evolving needs of consumers from OFDAs. Convenience and quality of information are considered as a crucial factor affecting the use of OFDA, but there has been limited research on the impact of convenience and quality of information in order to achieve customer satisfaction, especially among users of OFDA in Klang Valley (MCMC, 2022b). While existing studies have largely covered the adoption and intention to use OFDA, there have been few studies to document what happens after adoption and satisfaction outcomes.

Hence, it is important to explore these factors within Klang Valley context so as to gain insights into the factors that influence the satisfaction of customers of OFDA.

In this competitive sector, keeping customers as well as gaining them is as crucial as ever as the OFDA market expands. Customer satisfaction is found to be a critical factor affecting customer retention and repeat purchase (Alalwan, 2020; Ray et al., 2019). Smartphone usage and the availability of the Internet have allowed high accessibility of OFDAs in Malaysia, which have become an integral part of their daily lives (MCMC, 2022a). These platforms also feature a wide variety of food culture in Malaysia, which increases customer expectations. At the same time, the increasing purchasing power of the middle class has increased the consumer base of these services, which makes the consumer base dynamic and demanding (DOSM, 2023). This is particularly noticeable in Klang Valley, where lifestyles are fast paced, and people have access to many food options. In a time of fast-paced urbanization, technological advancements and evolving consumer tastes, OFDA providers must be aware of the characteristics that are most likely to enhance consumers' satisfaction. But this knowledge is not only a necessity for being competitive, it is vital to adjust to the particular needs of tech-savvy urban consumers, like those in Klang Valley, where high usage of the Internet, diverse food culture and growing purchasing power are causing a complex and dynamic market.

This study is based on the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) which states that the audience are active in choosing and using media or technological platforms to satisfy their needs and gratifications. Users could be interested in functional aspects like convenience and accessing the correct information when choosing and using an OFDA. Convenience and information quality thus can be seen as important factors of gratification that could affect the satisfaction of users with OFDA services. This study introduces the theoretical lens of UGT that can be used to understand the contribution of each specific feature of OFDA to customer satisfaction. Convenience in online food delivery apps is the ease of and speed with which customers can successfully use the service (Chai et al., 2019). This is crucial for food delivery as customers value saving time and effort. Consumers appreciate being able to order at any time or place, to not have to deal with crowded markets and to have flexibility. Platform efficiency is directly related to the convenience of OFDAs. With an efficient application, customers will be able to process orders faster and get food products delivered on time. All these smooth operations contribute to better user experience and satisfaction. The quality of OFDAs' information is another important aspect of the OFDAs. This shows the extent to which information in the application is useful, accurate and relevant (Negash et al., 2002). It provides customers with better information, which helps them make better decisions and use the app more easily, making it convenient. Many studies have been conducted on the relationships between convenience and information quality with customer satisfaction in OFDAs in Malaysia but few in Klang Valley. This is an urban area where there may be varying reasons that affect consumers' use of these applications. This pilot study was therefore carried out to fill this void and to present preliminary evidence on the linkage between convenience, information quality and satisfaction of OFDA users in Klang Valley. Also, the pilot study will be used to test the reliability and validity of the measurement instrument in a small-scale study before large scale study. These preliminary results may help to inform the design of a larger study and enhance the research processes. They can also help food delivery services to better understand their customers and enhance their key features. OFDA platforms can enhance the convenience and quality of information by tailoring to the information needs of consumers in Klang Valley. The findings of this study can be added to the OFDA literature as it expands the understanding of customer

satisfaction as an UGT. Practically, the results can help the OFDA providers to enhance the convenience and information quality of their platforms to better meet the users' needs.

Literature Review

This section reviews key literature on customer satisfaction, convenience, and information quality in OFDAs.

Customer Satisfaction (CS) towards OFDAs

Customer satisfaction is a measure of how well a product or service meets or exceeds customer expectations (Kok & Kim, 2021). Factors such as convenience and information quality have a strong impact on customer satisfaction in the context of OFDAs. Satisfaction is mostly measured in terms of factors, including food quality, perceived price, promotions, service reliability, and convenience (Kok & Kim, 2021). Customer satisfaction in the OFDA market is critical since it impacts on the retention of customers and market share.

A satisfied customer is likely to continue making purchases from the same business and stay loyal to the company's products and services (Peemane & Wongsahai, 2021). The key to successful OFDA business is customer satisfaction (Tamminen, 2016). OFDAs provide convenience by reducing the user time and effort. This is a reflection of the rapid urban lifestyle of many consumers. By providing high quality information, users can make informed decisions efficiently, which leads to a better ordering experience and increased satisfaction (Keeble et al., 2020).

Convenience (CV)

Users' perceptions of the time and effort needed to buy a product or use a service is called convenience in OFDAs (Copeland, 1923; Berry et al., 2002). It's a measure of convenience and effectiveness with which customers can place meals and get them without wasting time and effort. OFDAs increase convenience, such as by saving time and reducing effort for dining in restaurants, searching for parking, and standing in lines (Collier & Kimes, 2013). They also make things more convenient for their customers by integrating them with technology like one tap ordering and real-time delivery tracking. These innovations contribute to improving customer experience, making it less physically demanding, less complex in terms of decision making, and more seamless from order placed to delivered (Pal et al., 2022).

Information Quality (IQ)

Information quality in OFDAs is defined as usefulness of information that is provided for effective use by the users (Tam & Oliveira, 2017). This means menu descriptions and prices, promotions, delivery times and tracking information. This information can have a great impact on customer perceptions and experiences with OFDAs. Information is the key to customers' perceptions and experiences, and it has to be reliable and accurate. This information is crucial for customers to make their decisions on food, delivery options and value for money. People feel less uncertain about buying online, and they perceive less risk by having high quality information that allows them to make informed decisions, so they are more confident about the service (Choi et al., 2019). Trust can be lost, and customer satisfaction can drop when there is poor quality information, for example, when the menu is out of date or the prices are incorrect

(Lin, 2007). This mismatch between information and services may lead to a lack of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of the customer which can ultimately impact the customer's rating and customer loyalty. Information quality and convenience play a critical role in customers' overall satisfaction with OFDAs.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design involving OFDA users in Klang Valley, Malaysia. Purposive sampling, a nonprobability sampling technique, was employed to ensure that participants met the study criteria. The online questionnaire included screening questions to verify that respondents were at least 18 years old and had made at least one OFDA purchase within the previous month. Data were collected through an online questionnaire consisting of measurement items assessing convenience, information quality, and customer satisfaction. A total of 53 complete responses were obtained and used for the pilot study analysis.

The collected data was analyzed using SPSS Statistics. The analysis involved descriptive statistics to describe respondent profiles and Cronbach's alpha analysis to assess the preliminary reliability of the measurement constructs. All constructs achieved acceptable reliability values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency of the measurement items. The pilot study was conducted to evaluate the preliminary reliability of the research instrument and identify potential improvements before conducting a larger scale study. The findings provide initial evidence regarding the suitability of the measurement instrument and support further investigation into the factors influencing customer satisfaction towards OFDAs in the Klang Valley context.

Findings

This section presents the findings of this study. A total of 53 questionnaires were distributed, and 53 were usable for analysis. None were excluded, as all respondents met the criteria of being at least 18 years old and having made at least one purchase through the OFDA in the previous month.

Demographic Profiling of Respondents

Table 1 presents the participants' demographic profiles. Among the respondents, 18.9% (10) were male and 81.1% (43) were female. The respondents were categorized into two age groups: 39 respondents (73.6%) were between 18 and 22 years old, and 14 respondents (26.4%) were between 23 and 27 years old. Regarding employment status, the majority of respondents were students, with fifty-two respondents (98.1%) identified as students, whereas only one (1.9%) was employed full-time. In terms of average monthly personal income, 50 respondents (94.3%) reported having no income, 2 respondents (3.8%) earned RM 3,000 and below, and 1 respondent (1.9%) earned RM 3,001 and RM 6,000. Regarding the highest level of education achieved, the majority of participants held bachelor's degrees (44 respondents, 83.0%), followed by diploma holders (7 respondents, 13.2%), and only 2 respondents (3.8%) had SPM/STPM qualifications.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	10	18.9
Female	43	81.1
Total	53	100.0
Age		
18 - 22 years	39	73.6
23 - 27 years	14	26.4
Total	53	100.0
Employment Status		
Student	52	98.1
Employed (Full-time)	1	1.9
Total	53	100.0
Average Monthly Personal Income		
No income	50	94.3
RM 3,000 and below	2	3.8
RM 3,001 to RM 6,000	1	1.9
Total	53	100.0
Highest Education Level		
SPM/ STPM	2	3.8
Diploma	7	13.2
Bachelor's degree	44	83.0
Total	53	100.0

Reliability of the Variable

Table 2 presents the Cronbach's alpha coefficients, which were used to assess the reliability and internal consistency of the scales. All variables displayed Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.70 which is the accepted threshold for reliability, indicating appropriate and acceptable reliability. Customer satisfaction, consisting of three items, obtained Cronbach's alpha value of 0.817. Convenience, measured using five items, had a value of 0.736. By contrast, information quality, measured using five items, achieved the highest reliability score of 0.884.

Table 2: Result of Reliability Test Analysis

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Customer Satisfaction	3	0.817
Convenience	5	0.736
Information Quality	5	0.884

Hypothesis Testing

This section presents an analysis of the hypothesis. Based on the analyses conducted, this pilot study found the following:

H1: There are significant differences between gender and customer satisfaction.

To determine whether gender plays a role in differentiating the factors of customer satisfaction, this pilot study conducted an independent samples t-test, as shown in Table 3. This statistical analysis was used to compare the mean levels of customer satisfaction between male and female participants. Descriptive statistics indicated that male respondents ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.35$) reported slightly lower satisfaction than did female respondents ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 0.61$). Levene's test indicated unequal variances, $F(1, 51) = 5.152$, $p = .027$; thus, corrected results were reported. The analysis revealed no significant difference in customer satisfaction between males and females, $t(23.28) = -0.860$, $p = .398$ (two-tailed). The mean difference (-0.12 , 95% CI $[-0.42, 0.18]$) was not statistically significant. Thus, H1 was rejected.

Table 3: Independent Sample T-Test (Gender and Customer satisfaction)

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation		
Customer Satisfaction	Male	10	4.10	0.35		
	Female	43	4.22	0.61		
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	T-test for Equality of Means	95% CI			
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Equal variances assumed	5.152	.027	-.623	51	.536	-.12481
Equal variances not assumed			-.860	23.283	.398	-.12481

H2: There is a strong positive correlation between convenience and customer satisfaction.

H3: There is a strong positive correlation between information quality and customer satisfaction.

Table 4 shows the Pearson correlation coefficients used to determine the strength and direction of the independent variables (convenience and information quality) and dependent variable (customer satisfaction). Following the rule of thumb (Hair et al., 2003), both variables showed strong positive correlations with customer satisfaction. Convenience had a Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.647 ($p < 0.001$), indicating a strong relationship. Information quality achieved a slightly higher coefficient of 0.668 ($p < 0.001$), reflecting a strong relationship. These findings indicate a strong association between increased customer satisfaction, greater convenience, and higher information quality. Thus, H2 and H3 were accepted.

Table 4: Result of Pearson Correlation

Correlations		Customer Satisfaction
Convenience	Pearson Correlation	.647**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
	N	53
Information Quality	Pearson Correlation	.668**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
	N	53
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).		

Discussion and Conclusion

This section presents the discussion, conclusion, and limitations of this study.

This pilot study examined the reliability and internal consistency of the measurement instrument used to assess convenience, information quality, and customer satisfaction among OFDA users in Klang Valley, Malaysia. All items were adapted from previous studies (Collier & Kimes, 2013; Fiorentina et al., 2021; Liu, 2019; Pal et al., 2022; Song et al., 2017; Tran, 2023).

Prior to the main study, the reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Content validity was ensured through expert review, which recommended minor adjustments to improve the respondents' clarity and understandability. The instrument was then tested and the results revealed that all variables had Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating that the scales were reliable and consistent. These results provide preliminary evidence that the measurement instrument demonstrates acceptable reliability and internal consistency for assessing the constructs under study. The findings suggest that the instrument is appropriate for further investigation in a larger scale study.

Furthermore, this study revealed no significant differences between gender and customer satisfaction, suggesting that gender is not a determining factor in shaping customer satisfaction with OFDAs. This aligns with previous findings which argue that satisfaction is shaped more by the quality-of-service attributes than by demographic characteristics (Annaraud & Berezina, 2020). However, these findings are inconsistent with those of previous studies (Bhat & Darzi, 2014; Bryant & Cha, 1996; Mittal & Kamakura, 2001).

Pearson's correlation analysis further demonstrated a strong positive relationship between the independent variables and customer satisfaction. Convenience has a correlation coefficient of 0.647 ($p < 0.001$), whereas information quality has a slightly higher coefficient of 0.668 ($p < 0.001$). According to Hair et al. (2003), these values indicate strong relationships between the variables, suggesting that higher levels of convenience and information quality are associated

with higher customer satisfaction among OFDA users. These results are similar to those of previous studies by Chen et al. (2011) and Ihsan et al. (2020), indicating that the greater the convenience and information quality provided, the higher the level of customer satisfaction.

Generally, the results of this pilot study indicate that there is a positive relationship between convenience and information quality with customer satisfaction of the OFDA users in Klang Valley. These factors seem to be linked to the experiences of users and offer preliminary indications on the factors affecting customer satisfaction in digital food delivery market. The findings also offer practical recommendations for OFDA providers to improve app functionality, simplify the ordering process, design better user interfaces, verify information accuracy, establish a more robust data management approach, and conduct regular content updates. These are the areas that can be addressed to increase the performance of the platform, improve the customer experience and make sure that OFDA provider meets customer expectations.

There are several limitations to this study. This study was a pilot study with small size of samples and was limited to users of OFDA in Klang Valley, Malaysia. Thus, the results should be viewed as preliminary data and not as generalisable conclusions. Future studies will need to be conducted on larger samples of customers in a wider geographical region to further investigate and expand the scope of the factors that affect customer satisfaction with OFDAs. Future studies should be directed towards large scale investigations in different regions, based on these findings. This would validate the existing findings and enrich the findings and could give a wider knowledge of the factors influencing customer satisfaction in the OFDA industry. Further, investigation of other potential factors like delivery speed and quality of food may lead to a broader understanding of customer experience and consequently to a better-informed understanding of industrial practice.

Paper Contribution to Related Field of Study

From a theoretical perspective, this study extends the application of UGT within the OFDA context by highlighting convenience and information quality as important gratification related factors associated with customer satisfaction. The results of this study are valuable for the food delivery application providers and researchers for understanding the factors that affect customer satisfaction and how to improve user experience. Demographic variables like gender were found to be insignificant compared to factors like convenience and information quality in predicting customer satisfaction among OFDA users. This highlights the need for OFDA providers to pay attention to the functionality of the application, such as making the ordering process more convenient, improving the interface design, and ensuring the accuracy and accessibility of information. Furthermore, the use of robust data management practices and frequent updating of content are crucial for reliability and user trust. Focusing on these areas can help OFDA providers satisfy the needs of their customers, build customer loyalty, and boost their market positions.

Academically, this study contributes to the knowledge of consumer behaviour in the digital service industry, especially within food delivery applications. The results reveal the role of convenience and information quality on customer satisfaction, offering valuable guidance to researchers and practitioners alike, to maximize the digital service experience. Moreover, this study provides a reference starting point for future research by proposing to enlarge the sample size and extend to other geographic areas to confirm and generalize the results of this research.

Additionally, investigating factors such as delivery speed and food quality could provide a more comprehensive understanding of customer satisfaction and user experience in the OFDA industry. Future research can focus on these aspects to further enhance the theoretical and practical understanding of the factors affecting customer satisfaction in the food delivery application industry.

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