

FOOD TRUCK CUSTOMER'S PERCEPTION ON FOOD TRUCK SERVICE PROVIDER'S SERVICE QUALITY: CUSTOMER CONFIDENCE AS MEDIATOR

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Abstract

The food truck industry has gained a lot of prominence in Malaysia due to its effective mode of starting in terms of cost and risks involved. It has stood a chance to compete fairly with restaurants and other structures set to sell fast food and beverages. It is due to its emergency that a lot of studies have been conducted to determine its efficiency and quality of products sold by these food truck providers. This has led to some sort of neglect on the perception customers have on the quality of service offered by food truck provides. This study is thus an exploration of perception the customers have on quality of services provided by trucks and how this influences their repurchase intention and intention to recommend to food truck providers. Key concepts of this research have been divided into three variables and SOR model were used. The item for independent variable consist of assurance, tangibility, empathy, reliability and responsiveness, and customer recovery ; dependent variable consist of repurchase intention and intention to recommend, and the mediating variable of customer confidence were helps to develop the research hypotheses with the general aim being investigating what customers call quality services and how this boosts their confidence leading to repurchase intentions and intention to recommend to food truck providers. To achieve the results for this study, and effective results for that matter, this research employs a quantitative form of study. By interacting with a sample of willing 241 respondents this study is hoped to promote and provide data that can be relied upon and as well be used for establishing gaps existed in research on food truck service providers. It has been found from this research that assurance and customer recovery have direct and indirect effect on customer confidence and repurchase intention and intention to recommend. Meanwhile, tangibility, empathy and reliability and responsiveness have no direct and indirect effect. Furthermore, customer confidence plays a positive impact on both independent variable. These items used and results gained from this study is on service quality and food truck is new in the research field and these results could be the starting point of future researches.

Research paper

Keywords: Food Trucks; Revisit Intentions; Assurance; Tangibility; Empathy; Reliability and Responsiveness; Customer Confidence; Customer Recovery

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Introduction

The food truck has become a popular mode of entrepreneurship in the food industry in modern-day Malaysia (Yan *et al.*, 2019). This has become a trend not only in Malaysia but also in the world as people have gotten themselves immersed in mobile eateries, restaurants, and vendors with a general name, food trucks due to the ease in which they can access them. Food trucks are a large vehicle whose owners sell food under proper cooking facilities' conditions. These vehicles are known to serve all sorts of foods with some having even inbuilt kitchens the help in the preparation of on-spot meals. Yan posits that the most common truck foods in Malaysia are chicken, crispy, curly fries, floated juice, and all forms of fast foods. Truck foods have received a lot of fondness from the public due to their ability to provide all local specialties and varied cuisines from different cultures.

This trend of food trucks has risen to an extent of changing the face of entrepreneurship in Malaysia. Over the years, however, slightly, and gradually things have changed in this industry. The Food truck industry has become a popular selection for entrepreneurs to begin. This is due to its low costs of investment and risks involved too. Expenses like paying rent and paying off several management employees are delegated to the periphery. In comparison to putting up industries, the operation cost in the initialization of a truck food business is admirable. Food truck services have been more preferred by customers due to good quality that is correspondent to the prize of commodities (Shin *et al.*, 2019). The foods offered here are safe and healthy in comparison to other street foods. The rating of these foods has led to the

attraction of several customers to these trucks and this has led to the blossoming of food truck entrepreneurship. The picture below presents a sample of a food truck ready to be used in a business.

These trucks are mobile and make it easy for having the trucks stationed at different places, any place of choice. Food truck owners are at liberty to choose a location that can be accessible to customers especially those likely to benefit from fast foods such as schools and outside factories or general working areas. When services are not needed in an area as well, they can move to an area whose catchment is high. This becomes an advantage over restaurants that are permanently stationed. In these restaurants in case, customers fall out or do not fancy the dishes provided then the restaurant is likely to lose customers and not get a chance to relocate as fast as a food truck can. In the process of transit, food trucks can even rebrand and change their image. These dynamics make food trucks stand a chance over other food providing entities. It is uniqueness of a sort that comes with food trucks only.

Even with its newness in the beverage and food industry, food truck still meets many competitors in this field, from bodies such as traditional restaurants and fast-food restaurants. Even with this spirit of competition in mind, the food truck industry is interested in maintaining and attracting the customers who are most profitable to the business sector. Thus, the food truck is always determined to invest in quality to develop a repurchasing attitude in customers. Just like Namin (2017) points out, the loyalty of customers is an essential item in business, and business owners should invest in it as it is this that leads to the development of repurchasing patterns in consumers. It is very critical as it is the same that determines how long a business is going to exist. A business is dependent a lot on the customer confidence it develops in its

customers. Critics have argued that keeping old customers is cheaper than enchanting new ones. Researchers have identified several things that can affect loyalty and customer confidence such as, price of items, quality of services, switching value from commodity to the next supplier to the next, and the satisfaction of customers (Teng & Chang, 2013). Are these factors being all satisfactory, then there is the likelihood of establishing a sort of pleasure and loyalty in customers and this is a key determinant of how long food trucks remain in the market.

Moreover, this research by Medler-Liraz (2012) points out that issues of the cleanliness of the outside and interior environment play an important role in customer's choices of which food truck to buy food items from. Meanwhile, food safety is also dependent on the workflow, the arrangement, and design of the food trucks (Huam *et al.*, 2017). Many things make a customer get attracted to certain food trucks than others. It is in this interest that this study embarks on this research to fill the gaps identified in the study (Moghadamzadeh *et al.*, 2020; Ebrahimi *et al.*, 2021, 2022; Salamzadeh *et al.*, 2022). the study helps in establishing how customers perceive the quality of the services provide din truck industries and how this perception affects customer's repurchase behaviours increased with the intention to recommend, as nowadays customers are easily persuaded with word-of-mouth information (Talukder *et al.*, 2018).

By carrying out this research, the study aim at identifying how customer confidence is created by the quality services and how this leads to repurchasing intentions and intention to recommend in customers. Through interaction with independent variables such as ambiance, assurance, recovery

techniques. reliable and responsive service delivery techniques and been empathetic to customer needs food trucks are likely to create customer confidence which in the end will develop repeat behaviour in customers. These are the elements that have been less studied as customer's business entities and more, so restaurants are less informed of how ambiance is likely to influence the customer's confidence creation, especially when the ambiance has to do with the outside environment. These techniques are aimed at creating knowledge for food truck providers so that they can know the best moves they should take in the creation of confidence in customers thus leading to boosting of customers loyalty. As customer loyalty has increased, it will lead to the repurchase intention of the customer (Arbabi et al., 2022). Basing on how food truck is gaining prominence then the results of the study are likely to promote the industry which shall come with improved quality of food truck services hence increased customer satisfaction.

Literature Review

Repurchase Intention and Intention to Recommend Among Customer

Customer confidence and level of Satisfaction highly determine the rate of consumption is customers come in to point out that business entity owner has recognized a need to maintain customers, and more so attract new ones by building their confidence and satisfying their needs. The critic points out that it makes a lot of sense to maintain old customers that attract and manage to sustain new ones. The process is even more costly since products may require rebranding and developing better means of advertisements to appeal. According to Hussain *et al.*, (2015) the grounds under which customer satisfaction is realized is through the establishment of means to ensure there is

quality service delivery (Bashir et al., 2023; Yakubu et al., 2022). Perceived quality of services as this study will point out is the one that derives to repurchase intentions and intention to recommend. Ratanavaraha *et al.*, (2016) argue that customers will compare their desires with services delivered and be able to engage whether that is quality. When they do, they develop a satiable desire to visit a supplier. Customer satisfaction is what is defined as the evaluation customers have over the superiority or level of excellence in service delivery (Liu & Lee., 2016; Dana et al., 2022). Soleimani & Einolahzadeh, (2018) point out that business providers must monitor the revisit and repurchase behaviours in customers to understand the direction in which the business is taking.

Mokhtar *et al.*, (2018) points out that revisit intentions in a business is a very indirect message that a business entity is thriving. Revisit and repurchasing intention has been a subject of discussion under many discourses especially that relate to fast food supply and beverages such as restaurants, and hotels (Pham *et al.*, 2016b; Namin., 2017; Majid *et al.*, 2016b). These researchers have focused on how increased revisit and repurchase intentions have led to an increase in the revenue of companies. Gunaratnam, (2015) reports that there was increased repurchase intention in the Bubu food truck and most of the profits made were from such return customers. Even when researchers have focused greatly on repurchase intentions as portrayed above very few have focused on the provision of quality services that lead to enhancement of customers confidence and finally development of repurchase intentions and so this study will contribute to a piece of new knowledge to the food truck entrepreneurship.

Abdelhamid, (2011), avers that the satisfaction of customers portrays the necessity for business trucks to invest in it to boost customers revisit and repurchase intentions. Previous studies have pointed out that the increase in quality of food truck services has to a great extent improved the intention to keep on revisiting a particular business (Pham, Do, & Phung., 2016a). Customers will then base a current experience with a previous one and determine the quality of a particular business as well as gauging the attitude in the service providers. (Hyun & Kim., 2011). Research by Namin, (2017) and Pham *et al.*, (2016) agree that improved quality of services has contributed a lot to the desire to visit business premises again and again. This study thus recognizes the need that revisits and repurchasing intention and also intends to recommend to others plays in the success of the food truck entrepreneurship. As pointed out, it is evident that most researchers have focused on repurchase intentions in other enterprises including hotels and restaurants with little focusing on food trucks. As well a lot of research has pointed to the importance of maintaining repurchase intention and intention to recommend through ensuring that customers are satisfied. This study borrows a leaf from these researchers and seeks to provide data on what leads to the creation of confidence in customers hence the creation of repurchase intentions in food truck entrepreneurship.

Customer Confidence

The environment in which service is provided performs a great role in the establishment of trust of customers services (Han & Hyun., 2017; Bartrancea et al., 2019, 2022). Thus, many researchers have focused on customer satisfaction as the one that results to revisit, repurchase intention, and placed

little focus on the intention to recommend and customer confidence that is created by the provision of quality services (Rita, Oliveira, & Farisa, 2019). Many researchers have focused on customer satisfaction as the one that is realized after consumption has taken place (Ratanavaraha *et al.*, 2016). To Kim *et al.*, (2006) satisfaction is not derived from the experience that leads to pleasure but rather the evaluating process that renders the service good. This study adds more to research that has found customer satisfaction gratifying and to it recognizes the role that customer confidence plays in the boosting of a business enterprise and more so the competitive sector of food truck enterprises (Kim *et al.*, 2006, Chahal, 2017). It is this confidence that leads to purchase intention, intention to recommend, and lastly creates satisfaction after the quality of product and service is ascertained. As well this study points out that this confidence is not inherently in the product rather more in the quality in which this product is sold to the owner. The quality of care, how food truck is interested in recovering customers, the practice of empathy, and all those measures of quality as discussed in the SERVPERF approach (Ganguli & Roy, 2010). This confidence leads to repurchase intention development which is idiosyncratic and often constructed when the expectation of customers meets the quality of services offered (Eldejany, 2016). This study will react with the way varied customers view the quality of services and demonstrate whether this led to the creation of confidence or diminishing of the confidence they had in food truck products.

SERVPERF approach

SERVPERF is a scale used by many people to determine the quality of service offered to a client in an institution. The quality scale relies on five

underlying factors relating to tangibility, assurance, reliability, and responsiveness. The five factors considered in the use of this scale are independent of the clients' attitude or preference (Adil *et al.*, 2013). The quality measurement applies to any institution that handles many customers who may provide varied feedbacks of their treatment at a firm hence acts as a neutral point to determine the level of attention and care offered. The factors used in the SERVPERF do not only give a basis to gauge the customer service of workers within a facility but instead, it also gives a point to rate the performance of an organization in terms of handling and serving customers. SERVPERF is a measure of a significant relationship between service quality, the intention of purchase, and customer satisfaction.

Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) model.

In this research, Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) model were used to analyse the service quality of the food truck with the customer confident as the mediator and intention to recommend and repurchase intention of customer towards the food truck. According to Mehrabian & Russell, (1977), SOR model used to evaluate the awareness of hiding perception in service related sector. According to SOR theoretical model of environmental psychological, all the aspects of the setting plays a noteworthy role (S), moving customer's internal state (O), which drive the customer's behavioural responses (R). SOR model have been extensively used in the previous service related studies (Chang *et al.*, 2014; Luqman *et al.*, 2014; LI and Yuan, 2018). Chang *et al.*, (2014) explored that the relationship between consumer's passionate show and purchase behaviour based on the SOR framework. Moment, given the basic parts of natural cues in impacting consumer's behaviour, the SOR

provides a tight-fisted and organized way by which to examine the impacts of natural boosts on consumer's cognitive or passionate reactions and, in turn, their deliberate re-purchase behaviour.

This model used in this study as the framework of this research have service related variables; assurance, tangibility, empathy, reliability and responsiveness and customer recovery with the mediating role of customer confidence. Meanwhile, this research also studies about the customer's decision as repurchase intention and Intention to recommend about this food truck to others. This service quality based framework towards the purchase intention of the customer can be analyse using the SOR model. According to the conceptual framework of this research, the "S" of the SOR model is dependant variable which are assurance, tangibility, empathy, reliability and responsiveness and customer recovery , "O" is customer confidence which plays as mediating role in this research and "R" is repurchase intention and intention to recommend which are dependant variable.

Framework and Hypothesis Development

Utilizing the SERVPERF approach, this study investigates the impact of assurance (AS), tangibility (TA), empathy (EM), reliability and responsiveness (RR) and customer recovery (CR) on creating the customer confidence (CC) which leads to repurchase intention(RI) and intention to recommend (IR) of customer's toward the food truck. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework for this research.

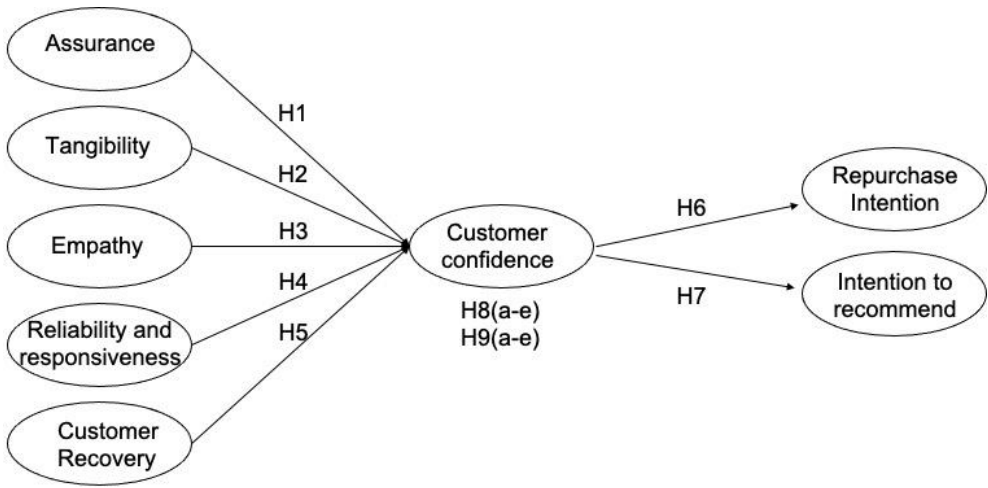


Figure 1. Research Framework

Assurance (AS)

Assurance is important in developing and plays an important role in gaining customer confidence (Zhao *et al.*, 2012). Assurance refers to the ability of employees to foster build trust and acquire the customer's confidence towards the organization (Pakurár *et al.*, 2019). Employees have the responsibility to ensure utmost consideration towards customer needs regardless of age. Politeness among other positive attributes are the determinants of service quality and hence customer satisfaction (Rasyida, Ulkhaq, & Setiowati, 2016). The most crucial employees that determine service quality concerning courtesy are those at the point of contact with customers. Credibility is an instance when customers can trust their service providers. In that sense, organizations especially within the hospitality industry strive to maintain believability with their clients as part of their ethical considerations (Rasyida, Ulkhaq, & Setiowati, 2016).

H1: When food truck providers provide assurance of quality to their customers, this will lead to increase in customer confidence.

Tangibility (TA)

Tangibility plays an important role in customer confidence (Prakoso et al., 2017). The focus of this element is the physical conditions of the FFRs. This element places much focus on the FFRs physical environment, products the customers consume, and the equipment staff members use in the provision of service to clients. The physical environments where the FFRs are located often have a role in determining the service quality since the perception it creates on a customer determines how he or she considers the service offered and how it might increase the confidence in customers (Kincaid et al., 2010). The physical environment offers as a metric to evaluate the quality of service a client receives since the conditions dictate the dedication of the staff while serving (Huam et al., 2017). The tangibility element evaluates the physical environment and provides a derivation point to gauge the manner in which the customers are served.

H2: When food truck providers provide good quality of tangibility to their customers, this will lead to increase in customer confidence.

Empathy (EM)

Empathy playing a positive role in customer confidence (Ul Hassan et al., 2020). Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of someone else. Essentially, it is the action of putting oneself in someone else's shoes in the quest to see issues from the viewpoint. In business, customers require such forms of empathy because it assists in caring and giving attention

to individual customers and this will increase customer's confidence (Bahadur *et al.*, 2018). Good communication skills aid in keeping customers informed in languages they can understand and listening to them (Muhammad & Kabir, 2018). When a customer understands the language the company speaks, they become attached to the firm, thus, increasing purchases. A good understanding of the customers is making the effort to know customers and their needs (Hyung, 2006).

H3: When food truck providers provide empathy to their customers, this will lead to increase in customer confidence.

Reliability and Responsiveness (RR)

The business must be reliable to sustain continuous customer as this will increase customer confidence (Suharto, 2016). Every client wants a stable business that will guarantee the availability of goods and services any time they want. Yuksel, (2001) tells that keeping promises and a trustworthy business employee goes a long way into building business reliability and adoption by clients. Reliability is The ability to be relied upon or depended on due to the ability to provide accurate data, honest, and make great achievements in life. For this research, reliability encompasses the ability of food truck customers to rely upon services provided by food truck providers which assures them of quality of services hence the growth in their confidence in these services (Suharto, 2016). This way, there is the likelihood of developing repurchase habits in customers hence promoting food truck services. Commercial responsiveness is defined as mannerisms in which a business reacts very quickly in situations that customers demand attention. This could happen during the selling process or after-sales process (sales and marketing tips, 2020).

In the study, it is if responsiveness of food truck service providers is likely to lead to the creation of strong confidence in customers hence development of repurchase willingness in the consumers.

H4: When food truck providers provide reliability and responsiveness to their customers, this will lead to increase in customer confidence.

Customer Recovery (CR)

Customer recovery is a process taken by a company to restore customer confidence and win their trust again after a failure. Customer recovery have positive impact on customer confidence (La & Choi, 2012) Vaerenbergh, (2018) defines customer recovery as actions taken by companies as they respond to service failures. The customer recovery process ends up giving customers a moment to rethink the services of the food truck operator and regain confidence hence becoming the once loyal customer again (Johnston & Michel, 2008). Customer recovery in the service sector is based on how we satisfy the customer after any failure on the order or the service we give (Robert, 2016). A service-related industry needs to fix the mistake so that it will lead to customer confidence.

H5: When food truck providers provide customer recovery to their customers, this will lead to increase in customer confidence.

Repurchase Intention (RI)

Customer confidence will influence the repurchase intention in customers (Upamannyu *et al.*, 2015). The repurchase is defined as the buying of products already bought it is the process in which consumers keep on coming back for the same product. Just like in other enterprises this is brought about

by the confidence that customers develop in food truck service providers. According to Hussain *et al.*, (2015) the grounds under which customer satisfaction is realized is through the establishment of means to ensure there is quality service delivery. Perceived quality of services as this study will point out is the one that derives to repurchase intentions. The quality of services provided leads to the establishment of trust and confidence in customers hence develops a repurchasing pattern in customers to the same food truck provider (Upamannyu *et al.*, 2015).

H6: When the level of customer confidence increases, this will increase the repurchase intention in customer

Intention to Recommend (IR)

Intention to recommend the food truck will be higher when the customer has confidence in the food truck they purchase (Gohari *et al.*, 2018). Taghizadeh *et al.*, (2013) define Intention to recommend as any communication between two persons where the person being talked see the one talking to them as an anon entity as no commercial regarding how they describe a product or services. Westbrook on the other had defined it as an all informal sort of communication which is usually directed at possible consumers about the ownership, use, and characteristics that define a particular product or services offered by a business entity. In a service-related sector such as a food truck, the only way customers can know about the service provided is by hearing from other customer's recommendations on the service provided (Namin, 2017). This study adds that this is not only beneficial for sellers who offer intangible but rather even those who experience increased competition. A positive recommendation from customers is likely to pull into customers,

maintaining old ones, and pulling in new ones and this happened when the customer gained confidence in the service provided (Mesas & Bellogín, 2020). Thus, the intention to recommend is very crucial and should always be given the advantage it deserves.

H7: When the level of customer confidence increases, this will increase the intention to recommend in customer

Mediating effect of Customer Confidence (CC)

Mediating variable is where the independent variable must be substantially correlated with the mediator, the mediator predicts the dependent variable even if the independent variable is accounted for, and the association between the independent variable and the dependent variable must be removed or decreased when the mediator is controlled (Baron and Kenny, 1986). The environment in which service is provided performs a great role in the establishment of trust of customers services (Han, & Hyun, 2017). Thus, many researchers have focused on customer satisfaction as the one that results to revisit and repurchase intention and intention to recommend placed little focus on customer confidence that is created by the provision of quality services. Many researchers have focused on customer satisfaction as the one that is realized after consumption has taken place (Ratanavaraha *et al.*, 2016). Thus, this research study the customer confidence as the mediator which mediate the effect of service quality criteria such as assurance, tangibility, empathy, reliability and responsiveness and customer recovery on repurchase intention H8(a-e) and intention to recommend in customer H9(a-e).

From the previous study, it has been shown that assurance have significant impact on customer confidence (Pakurár *et al.*, 2019). Assurance refers to the ability of employees to foster build trust and acquire the customer's confidence towards the organization. Fundamental elements to acquiring customer assurance include courtesy, credibility, and security. Meanwhile, customer confidence also have positive impact on repurchase intention in customers (Javed & Wu, 2020). Thus, in this study, the relationship between assurance and repurchase intention with the mediating role of customer confidence have been studied to understand more the customer confidence.

H8(a): Customer confidence mediates the relationship between assurance of quality and repurchase intention in customer.

Tangibility element evaluates the physical environment and provides a derivation point to gauge the manner at which the customers are served. It has been shown that tangibility have significant impact on customer confidence (Prakoso *et al.*, 2017). Meanwhile, customer confidence also have positive impact on repurchase intention in customers (Upamannyu *et al.*, 2015). Thus, in this study, the relationship between tangibility and repurchase intention with the mediating role of customer confidence have been studied to understand more the customer confidence.

H8(b): Customer confidence mediates the relationship between tangibility and repurchase intention in customer.

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings on someone else. From the previous study, it has been shown that empathy have significant impact on customer confidence (Ul Hassan *et al.*, 2020). Meanwhile,

customer confidence also have positive impact on repurchase intention in customers (Chao *et al.*, 2011). Thus, in this study, the relationship between empathy and repurchase intention with the mediating role of customer confidence have been studied to understand more the customer confidence.

H8(c): Customer confidence mediates the relationship between empathy and repurchase intention in customer.

The business must be reliable to sustain a continuous customer flow. Every client wants a stable business that will guarantee them availability of goods and services any time they want. From the previous study , it has been shown that reliability and responsiveness have significant impact on customer confidence (Suharto, 2016). Meanwhile, customer confidence also have positive impact on repurchase intention in customers (Nilsson & Wall, 2017). Thus, in this study, the relationship between reliability and responsiveness and repurchase intention with the mediating role of customer confidence have been studied to understand more the customer confidence.

H8(d): Customer confidence mediates the relationship between reliability and responsiveness and repurchase intention in customer.

The customer recovery is a process taken by a company to restore a customer confidence and win their trust again after a failure. From the previous study , it has been shown that customer recovery have significant impact on customer confidence (La & Choi, 2012). Meanwhile, customer confidence also have positive impact on repurchase intention in customers (Upamannyu *et al.*, 2015). Thus, in this study, the relationship between customer recovery

and repurchase intention with the mediating role of customer confidence have been studied to understand more the customer confidence.

H8(e): Customer confidence mediates the relationship between customer recovery and repurchase intention in customer.

From the previous study, it has been shown that assurance have significant impact on customer confidence (Zhao *et al.*, 2012). Meanwhile, customer confidence also have positive impact on intention to recommend in customer in customers (Gohari *et al.*, 2018). Thus, in this study, the relationship between assurance and intention to recommend in customer with the mediating role of customer confidence have been studied to understand more the customer confidence.

H9(a): Customer confidence mediates the relationship between assurance of quality and intention to recommend in customer.

From the previous study, it has been shown that tangibility have significant impact on customer confidence (Kincaid *et al.*, 2010). Meanwhile, customer confidence also have positive impact on intention to recommend in customer in customers (Mesas & Bellogín, 2020). Thus, in this study, the relationship between tangibility and intention to recommend in customer with the mediating role of customer confidence have been studied to understand more the customer confidence.

H9(b): Customer confidence mediates the relationship between tangibility and intention to recommend in customer.

From the previous study , it has been shown that empathy have significant impact on customer confidence (Bahadur *et al.*, 2018). Meanwhile, customer confidence also have positive impact on intention to recommend in customer in customers (Zhang *et al.*, 2016). Thus, in this study, the relationship between empathy and intention to recommend in customer with the mediating role of customer confidence have been studied to understand more the customer confidence.

H9(c): Customer confidence mediates the relationship between empathy and intention to recommend in customer.

From the previous study , it has been shown that reliability and responsiveness have significant impact on customer confidence (Suharto, 2016). Meanwhile, customer confidence also have positive impact on intention to recommend in customer in customers (Mesas & Bellogín, 2020). Thus, in this study, the relationship between reliability and responsiveness and intention to recommend in customer with the mediating role of customer confidence have been studied to understand more the customer confidence.

H9(d): Customer confidence mediates the relationship between reliability and responsiveness and intention to recommend in customer.

From the previous study , it has been shown that customer recovery have significant impact on customer confidence (Johnston & Michel, 2008). Meanwhile, customer confidence also have positive impact on intention to recommend in customer. Thus, in this study, the relationship between customer recovery and intention to recommend in customer with the mediating

role of customer confidence have been studied to understand more the customer confidence.

H9(e): Customer confidence mediates the relationship between customer recovery and intention to recommend in customer.

Research Methodology

Measurement of Constructs

Parasuraman *et al.*, (1988) suggest a model that is most appropriate in measuring service quality. they argue that the Gaps Model/SERVPERF approach is best for rationalizing quality of services and this study is going to benefit a lot from it in measuring assurance, tangibility, reliability and responsiveness, empathy, and recovery (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988). By examining the disconfirmation of the expectancy paradigm, it compares the expectations of the customers with the services provided. To achieve this, the research will use the quantitative method of research. In the quantitative method, research focuses more on collecting quantifiable data. This technique which is the technique that in this study is used to capture the whole selected sample is appropriate for large data as it is less involving. Researchers are left on their own to respond to closed ended questions where answers are provided in numerical forms. Survey questionnaires have been used to collect the data for this study. This survey questionnaire consists of 4 sections: demographic of respondents, dependant variable (AS, TA, EM, RR, CR), customer confidence (CC), and independent variables (RI, IR). Apart from the demographic questions, the other items and questions used in this questionnaire were adapted from previous researches to ensure the validity of the content maintained. Five-point Likert scales ranging from 1= “strongly disagree” to 5=

“strongly agree” were used to measure the items in the survey. The items for each construct used in this study were shown in Appendix A.

Data Collection and Sample

The unit of analysis in this research is an individual Malaysian food truck consumer who is aged 18 years old and above. The reason for limiting the respondent to be 18 years old and above is due to they have the purchasing power as the customer who can decide on repurchasing decision which is this research's independent variable from the same food truck.

The link to the online survey was sent out by email and other social media platforms. Filter questions have been used at the starting of the survey to make sure the respondents who are responding to these surveys have been to the food truck to purchase food. A total of 246 responses were obtained from the survey which 35 responses was responded to ‘no’ in the filter question, thus had to be discarded. A total of 211 was valid and usable for this analysis. Sample size according to the statistical power was used by calculating G*Power (Erdfelder *et al.*, 2009). According to G*Power 3.1, a total number of sample of 116 is needed for gaining statistical power of 0.90 for the model testing. The responses gathered for this study exceeded the needed sample size, this will increase the G*Power higher than 0.90.

Descriptive Analysis

The analysis shows that 50.2% of the respondents who responds in this survey were male and 49.8% of the respondents were female. The majority of the respondent were from the age group of 18 to 20 years (36.5%) followed by 21 to 29 years (24.6%), 30 to 39 years (20.4%), 40 to 49 years

(12.8%), and age group 50 and above (5.7%). The highest employability who responded in this survey was students (45%), then followed by those employed in the private sector (27%), self-employed (13.3%), employed in the government sector (10%), and unemployed (4.7%). The income range of those who responded in this survey was less than RM1,000 (49.8%), followed by earning of RM1,001 to RM3,000 and RM5,000 and above with (18%) and those with the income of RM3,001 to RM5,000 (14.2%). The statistics of the descriptive analysis of the respondents are tabulated in Table 1. 49.8% of the respondent of this study are those earning less than Rm1,000 and this correlated well with the student group whom are 45.0%. This figures shows that students are being a big target group in food truck industry. Thus, this study's result will be depends on the student's perception on the food truck service quality.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis

Variable	Categories	Frequently	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	105	49.8
	Male	106	50.2
Age	18 – 20 years	77	36.5
	21 – 29 years	52	25.6
	30 – 39 years	43	20.4
	40 – 49 years	27	12.8
	50 and above	12	5.7
Employability	Employed in Private sector	57	27.0
	Employed in Government sector	21	10.0
	Self – employed	28	13.3
	Student	95	45.0
	Unemployed	10	4.7
Monthly Income	Less than RM1,000	105	49.8
	RM1,001 – RM3,000	38	18.0
	RM3,001 – RM5,000	30	18.0
	RM5,001 and above	38	14.2

Analysis

For the analysis of this research, the partial least square (PLS) technique of structural equation modeling is used. This analysis method was chosen for this study due to the complexity of this study with more than one dependant variable and a mediator and this study also used a low sample size (Joe F. Hair *et al.*, 2011). Then, two steps of data analysis were used, first which involves analyzing the measures of reliability and validity of the measurement model, and the second step which involves structural model assessment.

Results

Assessment of Measurement Model

The model used in this study consist of the only first-order construct. The factors loading and the composite reliability(CR) were used and evaluated using the guideline from previous research (Joseph *et al.*, 2019). Analysis for the first order construct of factor loading and composite reliability from table 2 shows that the values are higher than 0.7 and 0.708 respectively. Apart from that, the average variance extracted (AVE) which serves as a measure of unidimensionality and evaluate convergent validity also show higher than 0.5.

Table 2. Measurement Model Evaluation

First-Order Constructs	Items	Factor Load- ing	CR	AVE
Assurance (AS)	AS1	0.786	0.934	0.701
	AS2	0.809		
	AS3	0.876		
	AS4	0.864		
	AS5	0.842		
	AS6	0.843		
Customer Recovery (CR)	CR1	0.870	0.948	0.785
	CR2	0.859		
	CR3	0.906		
	CR4	0.899		
	CR5	0.894		
Empathy (EM)	EM1	0.846	0.926	0.716
	EM2	0.851		
	EM3	0.864		
	EM4	0.877		
	EM5	0.789		
Reliability and Responsiveness (RR)	RR1	0.761	0.906	0.709
	RR2	0.758		
	RR4	0.896		
	RR5	0.937		
	RR5	0.937		
Tangibility (TA)	TA1	0.775	0.933	0.736
	TA2	0.840		
	TA3	0.897		
	TA4	0.895		
	TA5	0.875		
Customer Confidence (CC)	CC1	0.834	0.948	0.784
	CC2	0.906		
	CC3	0.916		
	CC4	0.885		
	CC5	0.885		
Repurchase Intention (RI)	RI1	0.871	0.960	0.827
	RI2	0.907		
	RI3	0.941		
	RI4	0.930		
	RI5	0.895		
Intention to Recommend (RI)	IR1	0.893	0.934	0.825
	IR2	0.922		
	IR3	0.909		

Note: CR: Composite Reliability; AVE: Average Variance extracted

The discriminant validity in PLS modelling is assessed by Hetero-train-monotrait Ratio of correlation (HTMT), as this is one of the crucial method in evaluating the model (Henseler *et al.*, 2015). The HTMT were less than recommended 0.90, thus this conclude that the all the construct are discriminant valid.

Table 3. Heterotrait-monotrait Ratio (HTMT.₉₀)

	AS	CC	CR	EM	IR	RR	RI	TA
AS								
CC	0.885							
CR	0.849	0.878						
EM	0.652	0.616	0.641					
IR	0.757	0.892	0.837	0.580				
RR	0.079	0.059	0.070	0.107	0.056			
RI	0.437	0.393	0.409	0.484	0.347	0.166		
TA	0.836	0.777	0.834	0.644	0.778	0.094	0.434	

Structural Model Evaluation

The predictive value from the independent variable to the dependant variable with the mediator used in this model has been explained by using the proportion of variance. The R2 values for CC, RI, and IR are 0.754, 0.139, and 0.664 respectively. This shows that 75.4% of the variance in the mediating role of CC is accounted for the AS, TA, EM, RR, and CR used in this study. It also shows that only 13.9% of the variant in the independent variable RI and variance in the independent variable IR accounted for the AS, TA, EM, RR, and CR used in this study.

In addition to that, the analysis of Stone-Geisser Q2 (cross-validated redundancy) was also done to study the predictive relevance to blindfolding in the PLS system. IT has been studied and concluded from previous research

that a Q2 value higher than zero shows the model is predictive relevance (Chin, 2010). The Q2 value gained from this model for CC is 0.582, RI is 0.112 and IR is 0.541. All these results are values higher than zero, thus it can be concluded that this model used in this study is predictive relevance. The structural model was also evaluated by using the bootstrap method as the distribution of PLS is unknown. This method involves taking a random sample with randomly replacing dropped value, and will give a different standard error on each run. This method is also used to measure the significance of the coefficient.

The results in the Table 4 shows that AS ($\beta = 0.423, p < 0.001$) and CR ($\beta = 0.441, p < 0.001$) have positive direct effect on CC. In addition to that, CC had a positive direct effect on RI ($\beta = 0.372, p < 0.001$) and IR ($\beta = 0.815, p < 0.001$) respectively. Meanwhile, TA ($\beta = 0.032, p > 0.05$), EM ($\beta = 0.043, p > 0.05$) and RR ($\beta = 0.031, p > 0.05$) had indirect effect on CC, thus it's hypothesis is not supported. Moreover, for the mediating effect of the CC between AS ($\beta = 0.157, p < 0.001$) and RI and CR ($\beta = 0.164, p < 0.001$) and RI. Meanwhile, TA ($\beta = 0.012, p > 0.05$), EM ($\beta = 0.016, p > 0.05$) and RR ($\beta = 0.012, p > 0.05$) shows negative indirect effect of CC as mediator to RI. Thus, H8a and H8e is supported, while H8b-H8d is not supported. For the second dependent variable, mediating effect of the CC between AS ($\beta = 0.345, p < 0.001$) and IR and CR ($\beta = 0.359, p < 0.001$) and IR. Meanwhile, TA ($\beta = 0.026, p > 0.05$), EM ($\beta = 0.035, p > 0.05$) and RR ($\beta = 0.025, p > 0.05$) shows negative indirect effect of CC as a mediator to RI. Thus, hypothesis H9a and H9e is supported while H9b-H9d is not supported.

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypotheses	Relation-ships	Path Co-efficients	T Values	P Values	Decision
Main Model					
H1	AS -> CC	0.423	5.505***	0.000	Supported
H2	TA-> CC	0.032	0.521	0.301	Not supported
H3	EM-> CC	0.043	0.740	0.230	Not supported
H4	RR-> CC	0.031	0.755	0.225	Not supported
H5	CR-> CC	0.441	5.862***	0.000	Supported
H6	CC-> RI	0.372	4.840***	0.000	Supported
H7	CC -> IR	0.815	25.272***	0.000	Supported
Mediating Effects of CC					
H8a	AS -> CC -> RI	0.157	3.405***	0.000	Supported
H8b	TA -> CC -> RI	0.012	0.487	0.313	Not supported
H8c	EM -> CC -> RI	0.016	0.669	0.252	Not supported
H8d	RR -> CC -> RI	0.012	0.712	0.239	Not supported
H8e	CR -> CC -> RI	0.164	4.232***	0.000	Supported
H9a	AS -> CC -> IR	0.345	5.381***	0.000	Supported
H9b	TA -> CC -> IR	0.026	0.511	0.305	Not supported
H9c	EM -> CC -> IR	0.035	0.736	0.231	Not supported
H9d	RR -> CC -> IR	0.025	0.729	0.233	Not supported
H9e	CR -> CC -> IR	0.359	5.133***	0.000	Supported

Note. *p,0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001 (one tail)

Discussion and Conclusion

As shown in table 4, the p-value of assurance is 0.000 which is lower than 0.001. This result shows that assurance (AS) shows a significant positive impact on customer confidence (CC) in the food truck industry in Malaysia

so the hypothesis is accepted. Assurance refers to the ability of employees to foster build trust and acquire the customer's confidence towards the organization. Fundamental elements to acquiring customer assurance include courtesy, credibility, and security. Courtesy involves the level of politeness by the employees towards their clients. Customers too require profound respect if they must feel a certain amount of satisfaction in the service provision. Employees have the responsibility to ensure utmost consideration towards customer needs regardless of age. Studies by other researchers show that assurance has a positive impact on customer confidence satisfaction (Rasyida, Ulkhaq, & Setiowati, 2016 and Adil & Mohammad, 2013). Politeness among other positive attributes are the determinants of service quality and hence customer satisfaction (Rasyida, Ulkhaq, & Setiowati, 2016). The most crucial employees that determine service quality concerning courtesy are those at the point of contact with customers.

Secondly, according to the results p-value of tangibility is 0.301 which is higher than 0.05. This result shows that tangibility (TA) shows an insignificant impact on customer confidence. Where the hypothesis is not supported. The hypothesis is not supported because the significance of the data is not gained even though the direction of the path coefficient in the hypothesis is positive. This element places much focus on the FFRs physical environment, products the customers consume, and the equipment staff members use in the provision of service to clients. This result from this study opposes the theory from previous researches (Huam *et al.*, 2017; Ovidiu & Oana, 2013 and Rahhal, 2015). In the study by Huam (2017), it shows that the physical environment offers as a metric to evaluate the quality of service a client receives

since the conditions dictate the dedication of the staff while serving. Meanwhile, the study by Ovidiu (2013) shows that the physical aspects of their products often give a point of reference to know how well or bad the customer receives services. The study by Rahhal (2015) shows that the nature of equipment employed by staff members when providing service to customers also dictates the quality of the service received because they dictate the time taken to complete service as well as the quality and quantity of products.

Then, according to the results, the p-value of empathy is 0.230 which is higher than 0.05. This result shows that empathy (EM) have an insignificant impact on customer confidence (CC) in the food truck industry in Malaysia. Where the hypothesis is not supported because the significance of the data is not gained even though the direction of the path coefficient in the hypothesis is positive. Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of someone else. Essentially, it is the action of putting oneself in someone else's shoes in the quest to see issues from a viewpoint. In business, customers require such forms of empathy because it assists in caring and giving attention to individual customers. Empathy includes access, communication, and understanding of customers. Customers will always visit businesses that are easy to access because it favors their needs. Previous studies also show that empathy has a positive impact on the customer (Muhammad & Kabir, 2018 and Hyung, 2006). Both these studies show that a good understanding of the customers is making the effort to know customers and their needs and make them comfortable to repurchase at the same place as it positively increases customer confidence.

Fourthly, according to the results, the p-value of reliability, and responsiveness (RR) is 0.225 which is higher than 0.05. This shows an insignificant impact on customer confidence (CC) in the food truck industry in Malaysia. Where the hypothesis is not supported. Yuksel (2001) tells that keeping promises and a trustworthy business employee goes a long way into building business reliability and adoption by clients. The food truck business's employees' character must be good to make sure that the clients they serve receive the best and are served accordingly. They must be honest at all the time on the menu and time of service orders. This result of this study opposes the results from previous researches (Scott,2020; Myrick,2017 and Chandler, 2015). Scott (2020) says that food truck entrepreneurship must maintain a hygienic condition to safeguard the client's health as well as all that takes food and work in the premise to ensure the customer has confidence in the food truck they consume. Myrick (2017) and Candler (2015) indicate that the hygiene of the place has an effect on customer confidence and to have a positive response from customers.

Customer recovery (CR) have an p-value of 0.000 which is less than 0.001. This shows that customer recovery have a significant positive impact on customer confidence (CC) in the food truck industry in Malaysia. The hypothesis of this construct is supported. Customer recovery is a process taken by a company to restore customer confidence and win their trust again after a failure. Even though failures cannot be averted; companies put in place the recovery procedures to revert things to normalcy again after such failures. The previous research on customer recovery by De Witt and Brady (2003) also shows that customer recovery has an important impact on customer loyalty and their purchasing intention in a service-related business. In another

study by McCollough and Gremler (2004), they also have suggested that customer recovery has a positive impact due to the confidential customer gained from a service. The customer recovery techniques are steps taken to recover a client after such failures occur. The recovery process aims at winning the client's attention and loyalty to the business back after an awful experience.

The p-value of customer confidence towards repurchase intention is 0.000 and to intention to recommend is 0.000. Both this results are less than 0.001. From the result, it shows that customer confidence has a significantly positive impact on the repurchase intention and customer's intention to recommend the food truck to others (Han, & Hyun, 2017). Thus, both hypothesis is accepted. The environment in which service is provided performs a great role in the establishment of a trust in customer's services. Many research has been done to analyze customer confidence in the service-related industry and the results also show a positive correlation (Ratanavaraha *et al.*, 2016; Kim *et al.*, 2006). These supporting research result from the previous studies can even increase the confidence on the result of this research on customer confidence have positive impact on the repurchase intention and intention to recommend on customers. Thus, the food truck vendors have to make sure they have given a good service which can gain customer's confident to have good income and business from loyal customers.

Customer Confident (CC) plays a mediating role in this study. The tangibility, empathy and reliability and responsiveness are not significant in both direct and indirect relationship in this study. This shows that in Malaysia, and especially among the student group, these factors are not very crucial in gaining confidants among them. This factors also not contributing to theirs repurchase intention and intention to recommend.

Theoretical and Practical Contribution

For theoretical contribution, this study will be contributing to a gap of study in Malaysia, as many researchers have focused on what leads to satisfaction and quality of products as leading to creation of customer services that lead to revisit intention and intention to recommend as the study will purely focus on the quality of services provided and not the quality of food served (Mokhtar *et al.*, 2018, Selva, 2020, Cruz & Vitales, 2015). It is the service that is of interest in this study. Issues like customer recovery mechanisms, and how reliable and responsive the food truck providers are. Studies have focused on level of quality products in business and little have paid attention to the mode of service delivery hence identifying a potential gap in research (Han & Hyun, 2017). Thus, through interacting with customers of food trucks, the research will aim at identifying what makes them develop confidence in food truck commodities and develop repurchase patterns. Moreover, from the results gained from this research, it has been found that tangibility, empathy and reliability and responsiveness is not directly and indirectly have effect on repurchase intention and intention to recommend. This result is new in the research context of food truck industry. Thus, this can contribute to further understanding on how these factors are not really important to customers in food truck. Further studies can be done by repeating the same framework but by collecting data from range from age group people. This is because nearly half of the correspondent of this research were students and this could be an impact on the result gained.

This study also provide practical contribution for the food truck Industry. Where, this study used Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) in determining the antecedents of the

knowledge of hiding perception and the consequences of service related variable with the customer confident as the mediator and repurchase intention and intention to recommend the food truck by customers. From this, the entrepreneurs in the food truck industry can understand the need of the customer more and give service accordingly for better business and earning. The study is likely to open the eyes of other entrepreneurs into venturing into truck food enterprises due to the effective and manageable risks. As well from the study it shall as well be noted that mechanisms of developing confidence in customers in not involving and this makes it easy to success in food truck entrepreneurship Donkoh (2012) and other researchers are key on how the perception of customers the food in a crucial influencer of the behavioural patterns in purchase intention.

Limitations and future research

The limitation of this research is that, due to Covid-19, the questionnaires have been distributed and data were collected on the online platform. For future research, the ambiance of the food truck environment can be studied to further analyse how the atmosphere has an impact on customer's satisfaction and confidence in the food truck. Furthermore, future researches also can study the willingness of the customer to wait in a long line to buy the food at the food truck as a dependant variable. From this analysis, we could find whether are customers willing to wait in a long line even though they are confident about the service provided by the food truck vendors. For future research, the data could be collected to all range of age group with different income range to study more on this SERVQUAL model which include assur-

ance, tangibility, reliability and responsiveness, empathy and customer recovery have impact on gaining customer confidence and how it leads to repurchase intention and intention to recommend among customers in Malaysian context.

Conclusion

The aim of this research is conducted is to understand the service quality factors that is affecting the customer confidence and the mediator and how this resulting in repurchase intention and intention to recommend among food truck customers. The result gained from this food truck will enable food truck entrepreneurs in Malaysia to understand more on service quality they need to provide in their corresponding food truck to attract more customers. The result from this study shows that assurance and customer recovery have a positive impact on customer confidence thus leads to customer's repurchase intention and intention to recommend the food truck to others. Meanwhile, tangibility, empathy, and reliability, and responsiveness didn't show a significant result in customer confidence. Interestingly, customer confidence plays a very important role in the intention for customers to repurchase and recommend the service to others.

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Appendix A. Items for construct

Constructs	No	Items
Assurance (AS)	AS1	The food served was exactly as I order
	AS2	The food truck offered a variety of menu items
	AS3	The food truck provided prompt and quick service
	AS4	The employees at the food truck provided attentive service
	AS5	The food truck was dependable and consistent
	AS6	The food truck offered value worthy of its price
Tangibility (TA)	TA1	The food truck had attractive interior design and decor
	TA2	The dining area at the food truck are thoroughly clean
	TA3	Employees at the food truck are neat and well dressed
	TA4	The food preparation area are thoroughly clean
	TA5	The food truck has a cheerful and enchanting atmosphere
Empathy (EM)	EM1	The food truck employees are always willing to help me
	EM2	The food truck employees understand my specific needs
	EM3	The staff at the food truck was friendly
	EM4	I was treated as a special and valued customer
	EM5	I am recognized by certain food truck employees
Reliability and Responsiveness (RR)	RR1	Food truck employees demonstrate professional knowledge (eg: knowledge of food)
	RR2	The employees at the food truck understood my specific needs
	RR3	Food truck employees provide service correctly
	RR4	Food truck employees provide service efficiently
	RR5	The ingredients and quality of food at this food truck are reliable
Customer Recovery (CR)	CR1	The food truck employees gives extra effort to handle your special requests
	CR2	The food truck employees quickly corrects if anything is wrong
	CR3	The food truck have employees who are sympathetic and reassuring if something is wrong
	CR4	This food truck makes me feel personally safe
	CR5	The food truck has employees who have the customers' best interests at heart
Customer Confidence (CC)	CC1	I made the right choice by eating at this food truck
	CC2	I am satisfied with the service quality at this food truck
	CC3	I am satisfied with the food quality at this food truck
	CC4	I feel satisfied for choosing this food truck to eat at
	CC5	I will put a good word for this f food truck when I talk with other people about it
Repurchase Intention (RI)	RI1	I would consider revisiting this food truck in the future
	RI2	I would consider revisiting and purchasing at this food truck
	RI3	I would encourage others to visit this food truck
	RI4	I would like to come back to this food truck in the future
	RI5	I consider this food truck as my first choice compared to other food trucks
Intention to Repurchase (IR)	IR1	I plan to increase eating at this food truck in the future
	IR2	I will recommend to my friends by social networking sites (eg. Facebook, Instagram and WeChat) to eat at this food truck, if it is available
	IR3	If I have a good experience with this food truck, I will recommend my friends by social networking sites to visit and eat at this food truck