

Beyond the Bucket: Factors Influencing Customer Satisfaction at KFC Malaysia

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Customer satisfaction is important because it can improve customer loyalty, reduce customers loss, and provide the management teams with insights to keep the business going. This study aims to examine how service quality, price fairness, and brand image will affect customer satisfaction at KFC Malaysia. A quantitative research design was used, and data were collected from KFC customers in Malaysia using an online survey. Data were collected from 200 respondents and analyzed to test the proposed hypothesis. The findings reveal that service quality and brand image have a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction, while price fairness shows a positive but not significant effect on customer satisfaction. The results suggest that customers place more importance on brand image and service experience than price when deciding how satisfied they are. This study suggests that KFC Malaysia should focus on service quality and brand image while maintaining transparent pricing. Overall, this study helps fast-food businesses understand how to improve customer satisfaction and stay competitive in Malaysia.

Keywords: Service Quality; Price Fairness; Brand Image; Customer Satisfaction; KFC Malaysia.

INTRODUCTION

The fast-food industry is one of the most important segments within the global food and beverage (F&B) sector. In Malaysia, this industry has experienced rapid growth due to urbanization, increasingly busy lifestyles, and rising consumer demand for convenient and affordable meals. Consumers are drawn to fast-food restaurants because of their convenience, standardized food quality, and reasonable prices. Quick service restaurants (QSRs) such as Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) play a vital role in meeting these evolving consumer needs and remain popular among customers across different age groups. As one of the pioneers in the fast-food industry, KFC has successfully expanded globally and continues to maintain a strong market presence (Yew et al., 2023).

However, the fast-food industry has become increasingly competitive, and customers' expectations now extend beyond food quality alone. Modern consumers expect superior service quality, fair pricing, a strong brand image, and increasingly, responsible business practices. Studies suggest that customers today are more informed, value-conscious, and sensitive to how organizations operate, innovate, and position themselves in the market (Kee et al., 2025; Xia et al., 2025). As a result, customer satisfaction has emerged as a critical determinant influencing customers' intentions to revisit and recommend a brand.

Customer satisfaction refers to customers' overall evaluation of their consumption experience relative to their prior expectations. As customer expectations continue to evolve in highly competitive markets, achieving customer satisfaction has become increasingly complex (Kee et al., 2021). Empirical evidence from Malaysia shows that customer satisfaction is significantly influenced by multiple factors such as service quality, pricing, perceived value, and brand-related attributes. For example, Yo et al. (2021), in their study on Shopee customers in Malaysia, demonstrated that service-related and value-based factors play a critical role in shaping customer satisfaction, reinforcing the view that satisfaction is a multidimensional construct applicable across both online and offline service contexts. In the fast-food sector, customer satisfaction depends not only on food quality but also on service efficiency, price fairness, and brand reputation. Customers evaluate their experiences by comparing a firm's offerings with those of competitors within the same industry (Xiao et al., 2019).

Recent studies have specifically examined KFC in different contexts. For example, Koay et al. (2023) investigated an AI-assisted food ordering and delivery management system implemented at KFC across Malaysia, Indonesia, and India, highlighting how digital innovation enhances operational efficiency and customer experience. Similarly, Husna et al. (2020) examined how organizational management practices at KFC influence employees' motivation and service quality, demonstrating the critical role of internal management in shaping service performance and customer satisfaction. This study aims to examine the factors influencing customer satisfaction among KFC customers in Malaysia, with a specific focus on service quality, price fairness, and brand image. Service quality reflects customers' perceptions of service speed, reliability, and employee friendliness. Price fairness refers to customers' judgments about whether prices are reasonable and justified, while brand image represents customers' overall perceptions and associations with KFC as a fast-food brand. Prior studies in the F&B and hospitality sectors demonstrate that these factors significantly influence customer satisfaction and loyalty (Hapsari et al., 2020; Konuk, 2021). Moreover, organizational capabilities, innovation readiness, and operational efficiency, often driven by digital transformation, can enhance service delivery and customer experiences in service-based industries (Kee et al., 2025).

In addition, recent literature highlights that organizational practices, including sustainability initiatives and responsible management, play an important role in shaping stakeholders' perceptions and brand image. Research in the hospitality sector shows that green initiatives and perceived organizational support positively influence employee behavior and customer evaluations, thereby strengthening brand credibility and satisfaction (Rubel et al., 2025). Similarly, advancements in sustainability reporting and transparent corporate practices enhance brand trust and legitimacy, particularly in highly competitive service industries (Lee et al., 2025). These insights suggest that brand image is increasingly shaped by both service performance and broader organizational values. Although extensive research has examined customer satisfaction in the restaurant and hospitality industries, many studies focus on service quality, price, or brand image in isolation. Furthermore, much of the existing research has been conducted in Western contexts or in fine-dining and hotel settings rather than fast-food restaurants. There remains limited empirical evidence examining these three factors simultaneously within Malaysia's fast-food industry, particularly for international brands such as KFC. This gap is significant because customer expectations and perceptions are shaped by local culture, economic conditions, and competitive dynamics (Rather et al., 2022).

By examining service quality, price fairness, and brand image together, this study offers a more comprehensive understanding of customer satisfaction among KFC customers in Malaysia. Focusing on a single international brand allows for clearer and more meaningful insights into customer behavior in the QSR market. The findings are expected to benefit both academics and practitioners by extending customer satisfaction literature in the fast-food context and providing actionable insights for KFC Malaysia to improve service delivery, pricing strategies, and brand positioning (Slack et al., 2020; Ali et al., 2023). Overall, this study investigates how service quality, price fairness, and brand image influence customer satisfaction among KFC customers in Malaysia. The study contributes to the literature by addressing an important contextual gap and provides evidence-based insights grounded in Malaysian consumers' perspectives. Such insights are essential for sustaining competitiveness and enhancing customer satisfaction in the fast-food industry (Nguyen et al., 2024).

LITERATURE REVIEW

In Malaysia's fast-food industry, customer satisfaction always matters because small frictions can shape the whole dining experience. Factors such as service speed, digital ordering options, cleanliness, and personalized service have been shown to enhance customer satisfaction level in the fast-food industry (Nguyen et al., 2024). Previous studies have mentioned that there are some factors that will influence customer satisfaction. For instance, service quality, price fairness, and brand image. But recently, there is limited research that analyzes these three factors together to affect customer satisfaction. Thus, this literature review synthesizes current findings on each construct and clarifies how these factors influence customer satisfaction in the local context. The review will first define customer satisfaction, then evaluate the effect of service quality, price fairness, and brand image on customer satisfaction. Based on those evaluations develops hypotheses and a conceptual framework for our study.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction represents the customers' overall evaluation towards the product or service based on their experiences and expectations (Rather et al., 2022). In quick-service restaurants like KFC, customer satisfaction is very sensitive. Small frictions such as order accuracy, queue time, staff attitude, cleanliness will have a big impact on customer satisfaction. It is commonly measured by using the 5-points Likert scale with

a few global items like “I am satisfied with the service”, “The service meets my expectation”. Recent studies indicate that higher customer satisfaction will lead to higher revisit intention of customers and make repeat purchases from that brand than from one of its rivals (Pérez-Morón et al., 2022). Customer satisfaction from online reviews appears to strongly influence loyalty and revisit intentions (Camilleri & Filieri, 2023). In addition, prior studies also suggest that companies with higher customer loyalty and satisfaction tend to have higher market share (Pandey et al., 2021). In Malaysia’s context, factors like halal assurance, price sensitivity, and crowding during peak hour, may affect Malaysia customers’ satisfaction. Accordingly, customer satisfaction was adopted as the dependent variable for this study as it can reflect the overall effectiveness of KFC Malaysia’s service quality, pricing fairness, and brand image.

The Effect of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction

Service quality has long been recognized as one of the strongest predictors of customer satisfaction, especially in service-driven sectors like fast food. Earlier research shows that customers evaluate restaurants based on reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, tangibles, and cleanliness (Song et al., 2022). In Malaysia, during peak time such as “buka puasa” or weekends, satisfaction will be very sensitive to the service delivery, packaging, order accuracy (Saporna & Claveria, 2019). When customers perceive the service to be prompt, friendly, accurate, and hygienic, their satisfaction tends to increase, leading to positive behavioral outcomes (Ganatra et al., 2021). Thus, service quality is expected to significantly influence customer satisfaction at KFC Malaysia. Therefore, we hypothesise that:

H1: Service quality has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction at KFC Malaysia.

The Effect of Price Fairness on Customer Satisfaction

Price fairness plays a major role in how customers assess their overall dining experience, especially in fast-food contexts where pricing is transparent and comparisons are easy. Recent studies show that customers are unsatisfied with unclear or inconsistent prices (Alderighi et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2023; Tan et al., 2025; Yen & Latip, 2024). Thus, clear and transparent pricing increases their satisfaction level. Previous studies emphasize that customers judge fairness by comparing what they pay with what others might pay or what they believe the price “should be.” Empirical evidence from restaurant studies confirms that transparent bundles, stable base prices, and clear promo terms enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty (Ahmed et al., 2023). In Malaysia’s competitive fast-food industry, where price-sensitive consumers such as students and low-income families value affordability and transparency, perceived price fairness can meaningfully shape satisfaction. For KFC Malaysia, showing a clear price along with a transparent fee breakdown and consistent bundle pricing can help KFC Malaysia reduce perceived price unfairness. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H2: Price fairness has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction at KFC Malaysia.

The Effect of Brand Image on Customer Satisfaction

Brand image reflects the associations and impressions consumers hold about a restaurant. Recent studies show that brand image positively influences customer satisfaction in fast-food restaurants. Customers tend to be more satisfied and stay loyal if the brand has a strong and positive image (Mubarok et al., 2023). Malaysian research similarly demonstrates that restaurant image will be driven by employee behavior, cleanliness, ambience, and overall experience which plays a major role in shaping customer evaluations (Krishnan et al., 2022). For a well-known brand like KFC, a positive

brand image sets expectations, influences perceptions of service encounters, and frames customers' emotional connection that can sustain their satisfaction across outlets and channels such as dine-in, takeaway or delivery. Therefore, a more favorable brand image is expected to increase customer satisfaction, and we hypothesize that:

H3: Brand image has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction at KFC Malaysia.

Integrating the Evidence: Why a Malaysia-Specific Test for KFC

Taken together, this literature strongly suggests that better service quality, higher price fairness, and a more favorable brand image will increase customer satisfaction in the fast-food industry. However, Malaysians tend to be more price-sensitive, value halal assurance, heavy reliance on delivery service, and crowding at peak hours such as “buka puasa” or weekends, which may influence the importance of these factors in KFC Malaysia. Recent studies often investigate only one or two factors on other brands, so there is limited research that jointly evaluates service quality, price fairness, brand image, and compares their impact on satisfaction within KFC Malaysia. Based on the previous research and Malaysia's market context, we develop three hypotheses and present the model in Figure 1.

Conceptual Framework

The study framework model is depicted in Figure 1.

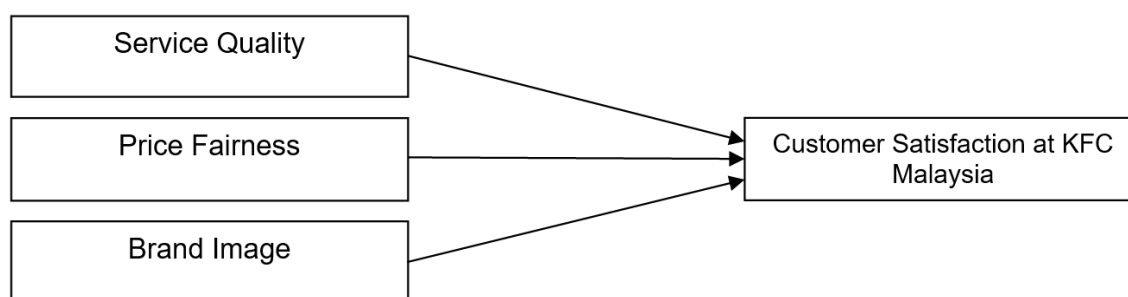


Figure 1. Research Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

Sample and Procedures

This study used a survey method to collect data from KFC Malaysia customers to investigate how service quality, price fairness, and brand image influence customer satisfaction. It focuses on Malaysia's quick-service restaurant industry, where customers usually engage in dine-in, takeaway, and delivery. Therefore, service speed, price transparency, and brand image is crucial. This survey was administered through Google Form and shared via social media, WhatsApp group, and university platforms. We also collected the responses from a few KFC Malaysia's outlets to get the most recent responses from KFC consumers. The survey was distributed from 11th November 2025 to 29th November 2025 (29 days), and received 200 valid responses. Respondents are only required to complete the survey in around 3-5 minutes. We set some quality controls such as all questions were marked “required” and limited to multiple submissions of the same account. The data were then analysed using SPSS software.

Measures

All items in this study, including those related to service quality, price fairness, brand image, customer satisfaction (Appendix 1), are measured using a 5-point Likert scale. The scale ranges from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). By using this format,

respondents can express how strongly they agree or disagree with each statement, which can help us to measure their views and perceptions. Statements created were generated based on KFC Malaysia's consumers, and we tested it to ensure clarity and relevance.

Service Quality. Service quality describes the customers' view on how well the service has been delivered and how the staff interact with the customers. In this study, three items were used to measure service quality. An example item is: "KFC staff are polite and helpful when interacting with customers."

Price Fairness. Price fairness refers to the customers' view on how transparent and reasonable the price and promotions offered. In this study, three items were used to measure price fairness. An example item is: "The prices at KFC are reasonable for the portion and quality of food I receive."

Brand Image. Brand image represents customers' perceptions on KFC Malaysia, how positive, meaningful, and different of the brand. Three items were used to measure the brand image in this study. An example item is: "KFC is a trustworthy and reliable brand."

Customer Satisfaction. Customer satisfaction reflects on how the customers rate the overall satisfaction when they visit KFC Malaysia, whether the experience meets their expectations. An example item is: "Overall, I am satisfied with my experiences at KFC Malaysia."

RESULTS

Table 1. Summary of Respondents' Demographic Information (N=200)

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	101	50.5
Male	99	49.5
Age		
18 - 25 years old	117	58.5
26 - 35 years old	46	23.0
36 - 45 years old	19	9.5
46 years old and above	3	1.5
Under 18 years old	15	7.5
Occupations		
Employed	50	25.0
Students	137	68.5
Unemployed	13	6.5
Ethnicity		
Chinese	94	47.0
Indian	44	22.0
Malay	62	31.0
How often do you visit KFC Malaysia?		
2-3 times a week	17	8.5
Occasionally	73	36.5
Once a month	66	33.0
Once a week	27	13.5
Seldom	17	8.5
Average spending per visit (RM)		
Less than RM15	12	6.0
RM15 - RM25	64	32.0
RM26 – RM35	81	40.5
RM35 and above	43	21.5

Source of information about the product		
Friends/ Family member/ Colleagues	61	30.5
Newspaper / Magazines	21	10.5
Online Search	16	8.0
Social media / ads in mobile app	102	51.0
Are you satisfied with KFC Malaysia customer service?		
No	6	3.0
Yes	194	97.0

Table 1 shows the demographic information of the 200 respondents. With regards to gender, the larger proportion of the respondents are female (50.5%), and male respondents comprise 49.5%, which shows that there isn't much difference between female and male. In the case of age, over half of the respondents are between 18 and 25 years old (58.5%), aged 26 - 35 (23.0%), and 36 - 45 (9.5%). Smaller proportions are found in the 45 years old and above age group (1.5%), and the age under 18 years old (7.5%). In terms of the occupations, over 50 per cent of the respondents are students (68.5%), the next is the respondents who are employed (25.0%). The lowest percentage of the respondents are unemployed (6.5%). Regarding ethnicity, nearly half of the respondents are Chinese (47.0%), followed by the respondents who are Malay are 31.0%, and the Indian respondents are 22.0%. For the frequency of visiting KFC Malaysia, the largest group of respondents reported visiting KFC occasionally (36.5%), followed by once a month (33.0%). Meanwhile, 13.5% visit once a week, 8.5% visit 2–3 times a week, and 8.5% visit seldom. Most respondents spend RM26–RM35 per visit (40.5%), followed by RM15–RM25 (32.0%). A smaller proportion spend RM35 and above (21.5%), while only 6.0% spend less than RM15. The main source of information is social media or mobile app advertisements (51.0%), followed by friends, family members, or colleagues (30.5%). Less influential sources include newspapers or magazines (10.5%) and online search (8.0%). For the satisfaction of customers, an overwhelming 97.0% of respondents reported being satisfied, while only 3.0% indicated dissatisfaction.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistic, Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha, and Zero-order Correlations for All Study Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4
Service Quality	0.750			
Price Fairness	0.639**	0.757		
Brand Image	0.592**	0.617**	0.711	
Customer Satisfaction	0.603**	0.557**	0.696**	0.769
Number of Items	3	3	3	3
Mean	4.46	4.34	4.7	4.45
Standard Deviation	0.60	0.57	0.44	0.57

Note: N=200; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. The diagonal entries represent Cronbach's coefficient alpha.

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics, Cronbach's coefficient alpha values, and zero-order correlations for all variables of the study. Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha scale should be 0.7 and above (Al Masud et al., 2018). The variables investigated include Service Quality, Price Fairness, Brand Image, and Customer Satisfaction, with a total sample size of 200. The constructs exhibit internal reliability with Cronbach's alpha values ranging between 0.711 and 0.769.

Table 3. Regression Analysis

Variables	Customer Satisfaction
Service Quality	0.255***
Price Fairness	0.093
Brand Image	0.488***
R ²	0.739
F Value	78.435
Durbin-Watson Statistic	1.819

Note: N=200; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Based on Table 3, our model has good explanatory power with R² being 0.739, denoting that 73.9% of customer satisfaction was explained by service quality, price fairness, and brand image. The model is statistically significant with an F Value of 78.435 and a Durbin-Watson Statistic of 1.819, this value is close to 2.0, indicating there is no problematic autocorrelation in the data.

Of all these predictors is brand image ($\beta = 0.488^{***}$), which is the strongest and most significant factor influencing customer satisfaction with the significant levels of <0.001 . This indicates that the brand's reputation and perception are the most influential factors for a customer's satisfaction. Price fairness ($\beta = 0.093$, $p > .05$) is not statistically significant. In this specific model, price fairness does not have a confirmed impact on customer satisfaction. This could mean that KFC customers in this group have already "accepted" the price as a given, or they prioritize the brand experience and service so much that the price becomes secondary. Finally, service quality ($\beta = 0.255^{***}$, $p < .001$) has a positive and highly significant impact on customer satisfaction. This suggests that the quality of service provided also positively influences the consumer's satisfaction. In summary, the results emphasize the tendency to evaluate customer satisfaction based primarily on brand image and price fairness, with service quality also contributing significantly. The high value of R² serves as further evidence of the strength of the model in determining customer satisfaction.

The relationships that customer satisfaction has with the three factors allowing the construction of the hypothesized model are provided in Figure 1. For hypothesis 1, service quality has a significant positive relationship. For every unit increase in service quality, satisfaction increases by 0.255. Customers value the "human" and "functional" side of the service. For hypothesis 2, price fairness surprisingly while the relationship is positive ($\beta = 0.093$), it is not statistically significant. This suggests that for this specific group (mostly students), the fairness of the price is not the primary cause of their overall satisfaction compared to other factors. Hypothesis 3, brand image is the strongest predictor of satisfaction ($\beta = 0.488$). The perception of the KFC brand name and reputation has the largest impact on how satisfied customers feel. Overall, H1 and H3 were supported, whereas H2 was not supported. Figure 2 presents our structural model.

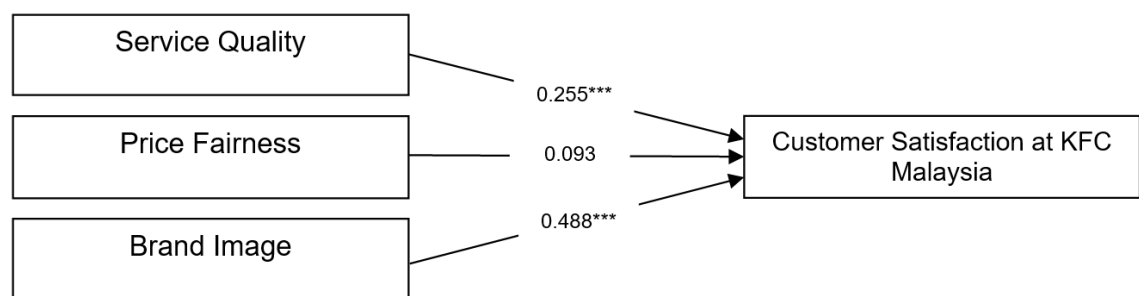


Figure 2. Structural Model

DISCUSSION

The study aimed to examine the influence of service quality, price fairness, and brand image on customer satisfaction at KFC Malaysia. It was motivated by the rising competition within Malaysia's fast-food context and the need to better understand the factors that affect customer satisfaction in quick service restaurants. By focusing on KFC Malaysia which is a globally recognized brand with a strong local presence, this study provides meaningful insights into how customers evaluate their dining experience. To maintain business performance and customer retention in the fast-food sector, previous studies have highlighted that customer satisfaction is the main factor of it (Slack et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2024). The results show that service quality and brand image positively and significantly influence customer satisfaction, while price fairness has a positive but non-significantly affect. Overall, brand image is the strongest predictor of customer satisfaction, followed by service quality. It indicates that most of the consumers in Malaysia care more about service experience and brand perception than to price, which is consistent with recent studies in Asian fast-food contexts (Ali et al., 2023).

The Influence of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction

The results of our study explain that service quality always plays an important and positive role in affecting customer satisfaction at KFC Malaysia, which supports our Hypothesis 1. It aligns with the previous studies that highlighted the speed, accuracy, and friendliness enhances customer satisfaction in quick service restaurants (Hapsari et al., 2020). In the fast-food environment, customers tend to have efficient service, shorter waiting time, and clean surroundings. These make service quality a key determinant of their satisfaction. In Malaysia, the importance of service quality becomes particularly important during peak hours like "puasa" or weekends, because at the time restaurants are experiencing high customer traffic. During these busy times, delays in service and wrong order will lead to dissatisfaction of customers. Previous studies mentioned that maintaining consistent service delivery across different outlets helps to strengthen customer trust and satisfaction in fast-food brands (Ganatra et al., 2021). Hence, this significant finding shows that KFC Malaysia must ensure their consistent in service delivery across all outlets.

The Influence of Price Fairness on Customer Satisfaction

The result of our study indicates that price fairness positively but not significantly affects customer satisfaction at KFC Malaysia, which leads to the rejection of Hypothesis 2. Although previous research studied that price fairness did influence customer satisfaction and perceived value in restaurant context (Konuk, 2021), in present study this relationship is not strongly supported. This outcome may be explained by the demographic profile of our research respondents, which majority of them are students and young adults. Prior studies show that younger consumers may care more about convenience, brand familiarity, and fast service rather than price, especially when prices are seen to be reasonable (Ahmed et al., 2023). Furthermore, KFC always offers promotions and bundled pricing strategies, which reduce the customers' sensitivity to price fairness. Therefore, price fairness plays a less important role in influencing overall customer satisfaction compared to other factors.

The Influence of Brand Image on Customer Satisfaction

The result of our study shows that brand image is the strongest and most significant influence on customer satisfaction, which truly supported Hypothesis 3. This finding aligns with prior studies that highlight the role of brand image in shaping customer satisfaction, even customers' loyalty and emotional connection in the restaurant industry (Krishnan et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2024). For an international brand like KFC, brand

image plays a vital role in shaping customer expectations and influences how customers judge their service experiences. A positive brand image may help to reduce the negative impact of small service problems. It can be explained by customers with strong brand trust are more likely to stay satisfied. This finding is supported by previous studies which stated that brand image can be more important than price when customers decide how satisfied they are in the fast-food sector (Ali et al., 2023). As a result, maintaining a strong brand image is crucial for sustaining customer satisfaction at KFC Malaysia.

Practical Implications

This study provides several useful practical implications for KFC Malaysia. First and foremost, KFC management should continue to improve their service quality across all outlets in Malaysia. For example, they can provide training for their staff, enhance their operational efficiency, and ensure consistent service delivery, especially during peak hours like “buka puasa” or weekends. Earlier studies show that a high service quality helps to increase customer satisfaction and encourage customers to have an intention to revisit the fast-food industry (Hapsari et al., 2020). Secondly, even though price fairness did not significantly influence customer satisfaction in this study, KFC Malaysia should also continue to have clear pricing and transparent promotions to avoid potential customer dissatisfaction. Prior studies indicate that unclear or inconsistent pricing practices will reduce customer trust, even if customers think the prices are affordable (Konuk, 2021). Lastly, due to the strong influence of brand image, KFC Malaysia should continue their efforts in building a stronger brand image. For instance, have clear marketing messages, active digital engagement, and improving customer experience management. A strong brand image not only contributes to higher customer satisfaction but also helps to support long-term competitiveness in the fast-food sector (Nguyen et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

The study investigated how service quality, price fairness, and brand image influence customer satisfaction at KFC Malaysia. From these findings, it has been found that brand image and service quality are the most influential determinants, significantly affecting the satisfaction levels of the 200 respondents surveyed. Specifically, brand image emerged as the strongest predictor, followed by the service quality, while price fairness did not exhibit a significant direct effect on satisfaction. These results highlight the central role of brand reputation and functional service delivery in shaping the dining experience for a demographic primarily composed of students and young adults aged 18 to 25. The overall model is statistically robust, explaining 73.9% of the variance in customer satisfaction. The insignificance of price fairness suggests that for well-established rather than a primary differentiator for this particular consumer segment. Regarding the implications of the findings for KFC Malaysia, the results indicate that KFC Malaysia should focus on the management of their brands and their services as a means of sustaining the current high level of customer satisfaction with a satisfaction rate of 97.0%. Since the majority of the respondents at 51.0% rely on social media and mobile apps for information received, it is recommended that the marketing efforts should focus on strengthening digital brand engagement to resonate with the values of the younger generation. Additionally, given the services quality as a determinant, it is recommended that the management should ensure consistent service standards to justify the average spending of RM26 to RM35 per visit reported by 40.5% of the sample. For advanced researchers and general readers, it is suggested that the future studies to see if price fairness remains non-significant across different income levels. Additionally, researchers are encouraged to incorporate other variables such as food quality, physical environment or menu variety to account for the remaining 26.1% of unexplained variance in customer satisfaction.

LIMITATION

Although this study provides significant insights into the drivers of customer satisfaction at KFC Malaysia, several limitations need to be acknowledged. A major limitation of this study is the sample composition. 68.5% of respondents were students, and 58.5% were aged between 18 and 25. Consequently, the findings essentially represent a Gen Z and younger consumer perspective. The results may not be generalizable to older demographics, corporate professionals, or families with different spending priorities. Second, the study was conducted with a sample of N=200. While sufficient for basic regression analysis, a larger and more geographically diverse sample across various states in Malaysia would provide a more robust and comprehensive understanding of the national consumer base. Third, this research focused on Service Quality, Price Fairness, and Brand Image. However, other critical factors that may influence satisfaction such as Food Quality (Taste), Location or Accessibility, and Cleanliness were not included in the model. This is reflected in the R² of 0.739, suggesting that 26.1% of customer satisfaction is still explained by factors outside this study.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors have declared no potential conflicts of interest concerning the study, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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