

EVALUATION OF FACTORS DETERMINING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION WITH MOBILE FOOD VENDING IN SALEM CITY

N. shanmugasuriyan, Dr. R. Kavitha

Abstract— Eating food outside has become a trend these days as fast work schedules of people doesn't give them enough time to prepare food themselves. Getting a ready to eat food of one's choice from an outlet is worth than wasting time in preparing especially in commercial cities and towns in India. Mostly people in India prefer to take food outside from various outlets like hotels, restaurants, dhabaas, mobile food vendors etc., according to their convenience, preference and taste. Increase in expectations and changing culinary tastes of consumers make the food business dynamic in general. Despite the increasing interest in the area there is very little research on customer satisfaction in mobile food vending service in our domestic market. Keeping these conditions in view, the study tries to explore the current scenario in which mobile food vending has become a flourishing business and means of earning livelihood for lot of people as it has been successful in attracting a large mass of customers.. This study analyses some factors which affect customer satisfaction and the formation of customer reliability towards mobile food vending in Salem city. The present survey has been done on 100 customers who purchase/eat food from mobile food vendors at various places in Salem city. It identifies the most relevant understanding of satisfaction, and determines their influence in choosing mobile food outlets through judgments of satisfaction and performance. The results show that satisfaction is a mediate element between the performance and disconfirmation of mobile food selling and has a positive influence on gaining customer delight.

Index Terms— Customer Satisfaction, Mobile Food Vendors, Price, Positive Word of Mouth, Customer Expectations

INTRODUCTION

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N. shanmugasuriyan, Ph.D research scholar, Department of commerce, Periyar university, Salem-11, tamil nadu, India
Dr. R. Kavitha, Assistant professor, Department of commerce, Periyar university, Salem-11, tamil nadu, India

Mobile food vending is a type of serving food to customers outside unlike a restaurant or dhabaas, which serves the food in its premises. It is most commonly found in large cities and towns. People use, three or four wheeler self driven carts, three wheelers autos, four wheeler mini vans and trucks to vend food. Most of them have a usual place to serve food but some of them change the place according to competition, demand and other factors. The mobile food vendors are not available for all the time in a day as these food vendors sell food for a specified time period during a day i.e. afternoon and evening only. These mobile food vendors can be seen at any place like outside a college campus, outside an office building, outside a shopping complex, outside a hospital, outside an apartment, outside a bus terminus, outside a railway station, on the side of a road at any place etc. and where not? These local food vendors serve food at cheap rates compared to restaurants, hotels and dhabaas, because of the low maintenance costs and low investment. So the people who are busy with their work and cannot prepare food by themselves or want a cheap meal have a better option to satisfy their need.

The mobile food vendor has a direct contact with the customer. So it is imperative to work closely to satisfy a customer as customer has the key role in any business, without customer any business cannot exist. It is the customer who creates and develops a business. So customer is the major part of business and business succeeds only because of customer, without the customer there is no business. Customer satisfaction is customer expectation in terms of quality and service for which he pays. Satisfied customers are promotional tools for any business as it helps to boost the business by spreading positive word of mouth.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Soriano, 2002) found that customer satisfaction is considered as a factor encouraging customers to use the service again, though there is no guaranty that a satisfied customer will return for a repeat purchase. The response of the customer to the evaluation of the perceived discrepancy between previous expectations and the actual performance of the product is perceived after its consumption (Caruana, 2002).

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From the consumer's perspective, price is what the customer pays or gives for obtaining the product or service. Fairness of price is a psychological factor that plays an important role in the customer's reaction to the paid price (Kim et al., 2006). Further (Joewono and Kubota, 2007) observed that when the actual service result provided by the service provider is higher than the customer service expectation, then the customer will be very satisfied; if it is to the contrary, the customer will be very dissatisfied. (Abdeldayem and Khanfar, 2007) stated that the degree of disconfirmation felt by a consumer should diminish over time, it further identifies that consumers will learn as they gain experience with a product, and should adapt expectations consequently.

As (Franco, et al., 2009) affirmed that trust is a psychological state that leads to confidence of one person in another person and creates expectations of favorable consequences from others' behavior. Thus, it is an indicator of confidence in actuality and reliability of the two sides of exchange and (Ali and Kapoor, 2010) in their research showed that the consumers has following priority while choosing a shopping place like cleanliness/freshness of food products, price, variety, quality, non-seasonal availability and packaging. Shoppers preferred to shopping market, where there were additional services available, children's attraction, basic amenities and the place should be affordable. Moreover (Cheng, et al., 2011) believed that more the satisfaction customers received; the stronger the customers' inertial consumption behavior of the fast food industry will become, which will assist in maintaining the relationship between the industry and the customer, and strengthen customer loyalty.

As stated by (Rahman, et al., 2012) customers do not think that the price of products and services is based on cost and taste of food items is compared with price. So, restaurant owners should redesign the price of products comparing with the quality and taste of the food items. The research results of (Haghighi, et al., 2012) showed that food quality, service quality, restaurant environment, and perception of price fairness had a positive impact on customer satisfaction also food quality, service quality, and perception of price fairness had a positive effect on customer trust.

From the above reviews one can easily summarize that enough care needs to be taken while dealing with the customer especially to make a customer fully satisfied is a difficult task but not impossible. The need is to understand a customer in a better way. A lot of factors must be taken into consideration to deal with the customer in food business like customer convenience, quality and quantity, price consciousness, service, variety, health and hygiene etc.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors influencing the customer satisfaction on purchase of food from local mobile food vendors. Further the researcher wants to analyze the relationship between different variables proposed for the study.

METHODOLOGY

In the present study a survey has been done on a sample of 100 customers who purchase food from mobile food vendors in Salem city. Both the primary and secondary methods of data collection have been used. Four local mobile food vendors have been selected randomly and sample (25 customers from each vendor) was chosen by convenience sampling as the total population was unknown. A structured questionnaire was administered among the customers to collect the response as primary data. The secondary source of data collection was through journals, books, magazines and through informal discussion with food vendors.

Hypothesis

H01: There is no relationship between distance travelled and

H01a: Age, **H01b:** Gender, **H01c:** Marital status, **H01d:** Income, **H01e:** Occupation, **H01f:** Place convenience, **H01g:** Affordable price level, **H01h:** Better quality of food, **H01i:** Sufficient quantity of food, **H01j:** Taste of food, **H01k:** Availability of variety in food, **H01l:** Courteous behaviour of seller, **H01m:** like to recommend the vendor.

Results and Discussion

Sample Profile

All the demographic characteristics like age, gender, marital status, income, occupation and residence were taken into account while seeking response from the customers who buy food from local food vendors. The age of the respondents was fairly distributed with (36 percent) less than 25 years, (23 percent) between age group 25-35 years, (17 percent) between 35-45 years, (17 percent) between 45-55 years and (7 percent) above 55 years. Gender was more unevenly distributed as (93 percent) of them were males and only (7 percent) were females. (63 percent) of the respondents were married and (37 percent) were unmarried. Majority of the respondents (38 percent) were employees, (22 percent) belong to professionals, (21 percent) were in business, (12 percent) belong to other category and (7 percent) were students. (56 percent) were local and (44 percent) non local. (17 percent) of the respondents fall in the income level of less than 50000, while as (34 percent) fall in the income level of 50000-1 lac, (37 percent) of them fall in income level of 1 – 1.5 lac and only (12 percent) fall in income level above 1.5 lac.

Moreover the study has also focused on some of the main factors like distance travelled, frequency of visit; amounts spent and like to recommend the vendor. Distance travelled was evenly distributed as (29 percent) cover a distance of less than 2 km, (48 percent) travel a distance between 2-5 km and (23 percent) travelled above 5 km. Only (25 percent) of the respondents visit the vendor daily, (51 percent) visit alternate days, (17 percent) visit once in a week and (7 percent) visit occasionally. (11 percent) of the respondents spend below Rs. 50 on single time purchase of food, (34 percent) spend Rs. 50-75, (27

percent) spend between Rs. 75-100 and (28 percent) spend above Rs. 100.

Further the respondents were asked to rate some of the factors on a five point scale varying from strongly agreed to strongly disagree. The factors are place convenience, affordable price level, better quality of food, sufficient quantity of food, taste of food, availability of variety in food, and courteous behavior of seller

The tools used in the study are simple percentage analysis, correlation analysis, factor analysis, multiple linear regression analysis and ANOVA. All the results were analyzed by using SPSS 15.0.

Table 1.0. Descriptive Statistics Variables	N	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)
Age	100	2.36	1.314
Gender	100	1.07	0.256
Marital Status	100	1.37	0.485
Income	100	2.44	0.914
Occupation	100	2.33	1.364
Residence	100	1.44	0.499
Distance travelled	100	1.94	0.722
Frequency of visit	100	2.06	0.839
Amount spent	100	2.72	0.996
Place convenience	100	4.16	0.564
Affordable price level	100	4.18	0.593
Better quality	100	4.02	0.619
Sufficient quantity	100	3.99	0.643
Taste	100	3.89	0.584
Availability of variety	100	3.63	0.800
Courteous behavior of seller	100	3.13	1.308
Like to recommend	100	1.21	0.409
Valid N (list wise)	100		

The descriptive statistics given in the table 1.0 shows that the highest mean is obtained by affordable price level of food (M = 4.18, SD = 0.593) followed by place convenience (M = 4.16, SD = 0.564), better quality of food (M = 4.02, SD = 0.619) and sufficient quantity (M = 3.99, SD = 0.643). The lowest mean is achieved by gender (M = 1.07, SD = 0.256), followed by like to

recommend (M = 1.21, SD = 0.409). It means that mobile food vending has achieved an overall good customer satisfaction level.

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was performed in order to reduce the diverse variables into a more meaningful number of variables and also assists in examining inter-relationships among the variables.

Table 1.1. Anti-image Correlation Matrices

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	0.591									
2	-0.613	0.631								
3	-0.052	-0.276	0.685							

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4	0.214	0.021	0.062	0.533						
5	0.106	0.055	-0.122	0.087	0.607					
6	-0.062	0.024	-0.101	-0.291	-0.223	0.651				
7	0.033	0.001	-0.011	0.027	-0.357	-0.057	0.718			
8	0.051	0.076	0.025	0.112	0.072	-0.234	-0.154	0.737		
9	-0.038	-0.101	-0.040	-0.199	0.056	-0.241	-0.170	-0.184	0.646	
10	0.131	0.149	0.406	0.323	-0.149	0.082	-0.036	-0.159	-0.227	0.599

a. Measures of Sampling Adequacy (MSA)

Variables: 1. Distance travelled, 2. Frequency of visit, 3. Amount spend, 4. Place convenience, 5. Affordable price level, 6. Better quality food, 7. Sufficient quantity of food, 8. Taste, 9. Availability of variety, 10. Courteous behavior of seller.

Examination of the 10 variables in the table 1.1 identifies that all the variables have an average sampling adequacy values above 0.500. Therefore, all the variables acquire and exceed the minimum acceptable level of sampling adequacy and are statistically significant and collectively meet the necessary threshold level. Each of the variables can be further processed to factor analysis.

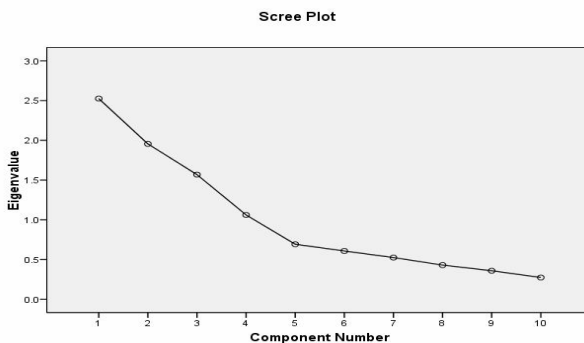


Figure 1.0 Extracted four factor components

Further the above scree plot in the fig 1.0 determines that optimal number of components according to the Kaiser criterion with Eigen values above 1. So the number of components to be extracted is 4. The components where the curve changes the direction and becomes somewhat horizontal contribute very little to the variation and therefore can be eliminated.

Table 1.2. Rotated Component Matrix (a)

Variables	Component factors				Communalities
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	
Distance travelled	0.857				0.799
Frequency of visit	0.887				0.810
Amount spent	0.624				0.688
Better quality		0.610			0.653
Taste		0.672			0.555
Availability of variety		0.817			0.685
Place convenience			0.771		0.751
Courteous behavior of seller			0.773		0.754
Affordable price level				0.878	0.784
Sufficient quantity				0.723	0.632
Eigen values	2.525	1.955	1.569	1.061	
Percentage of total variance	25.248	19.553	15.688	10.610	
Cumulative percentage of variance	25.248	44.801	60.489	71.099	
Number of items per factor	3	3	2	2	
Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (MSA)	0.639				

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Approx. Chi-Square)	247.296
df.	45
Sig.	0.000

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
 a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations
 A total of 10 variables were analyzed in table 1.2 by factor analysis to find the underlying dimensions of customer satisfaction towards mobile food vending. The study used principal component analysis with Varimax rotation and Eigen values equal to or more than 1 (Kinnear and Taylor, 1987), in proving a suitable factorial framework within 6 iterations. In the final round the items of factor loadings less than 0.50 were dropped and loadings equal to or above 0.50 were retained. A total of 71.099 percent of variance emerged from the variables.
 The above table also displays the adequacy of data for factor analysis, Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (MSA) should be above 0.600 (Tabachnik and Fidel, 2001) for our

sample to be adequate for factor analysis. The p-value of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Approx. Chi-Square) should be less than 0.50. Based on the observation from the above table, factor analysis for our survey is adequate.

Further according to (Hair et al., 1998) the size of communality is also useful index in assessing how much variance in a particular variable is accounted for by factor solution. Large communalities indicate a large amount of variance in a variable has been extracted by factor analysis and vice versa. In the above factor analysis all the communality values of variables indicate that they share more communality with each other. Labeling the factors can lead to an overall criticism but the researcher has tried to brand the factors as shown below in table 1.3.

Table 1.3. Factors Labeled

Factor No.	1	2	3	4
Label	Customer Affordability	Food attributes	Eating comfort	Value for money

Note: Developed by the author

Multiple Linear Regressions

Table 1.4 ^(b) Model Summary	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.615(a)	0.378	0.284	0.611

a. Predictors: (Constant), Like to recommend, Age, Occupation, Gender, Income, Place convenience, Taste, Affordable price level, Availability of variety, Better quality, Sufficient quantity, Courteous behavior of seller, Marital Status
 b. Dependent Variable: Distance travelled

Thirteen variables have been correlated in table 1.4 effectively, the multiple regression coefficient R is 0.615 and indicates high degree of association. The R-Square of the model equals 37.80 percent and the R-Square adjusted equals 28.40 percent. This means that only 28.40 changes in the dependent variable (distance travelled) are due to the variation in independent variables used in this model.

Table 1.5. ANOVA^(b)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	19.513	13	1.501	4.018	0.000
	Residual	32.127	86	0.374		
	Total	551.640	99			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Like to recommend, Age, Occupation, Gender, Income, Place convenience, Taste, Affordable price level, Availability of variety, Better quality, Sufficient quantity, Courteous behavior of seller, Marital Status

b. Dependent Variable: Distance travelled.
 Table 1.5 portrays that F test of the model equals to 4.018 and it is significant at 1% and 5% level of significance. Since p-value is significant it indicates that the variance is significant between independent variables and distance travelled to the place.

Table 1.6. Coefficients^(a)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics
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	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	6.616	1.067		6.199	0.000		
Age	-0.196	0.064	-0.357	-3.046	0.003	0.526	1.900
Gender	-0.396	0.252	-0.141	-1.569	0.120	0.901	1.110
Marital Status	-0.019	0.168	-0.012	-0.110	0.912	0.566	1.766
Income	0.270	0.075	0.341	3.605	0.001	0.806	1.240
Occupation	-0.034	0.056	-0.064	-0.610	0.544	0.652	1.534
Place convenience	-0.520	0.132	-0.405	-3.921	0.000	0.677	1.477
Affordable price level	-0.292	0.133	-0.240	-2.192	0.031	0.604	1.656
Better quality	0.050	0.126	0.042	0.394	0.694	0.623	1.605
Sufficient quantity	-0.202	0.126	-0.180	-1.596	0.114	0.571	1.751
Taste	-0.157	0.123	-0.127	-1.283	0.203	0.735	1.361
Availability of variety	0.138	0.094	0.153	1.463	0.147	0.664	1.506
Courteous behavior	0.006	0.072	0.011	0.087	0.931	0.432	2.317
Like to recommend	0.217	0.191	-0.123	-1.136	0.259	0.616	1.624

table 1.6 below, further the results of multi co linearity is also acceptable, as the tolerance value is near to 1 and the variance of inflation factor is less than 10.

a. Dependent Variable: Distance travelled

When customer satisfaction is scaled by distance travelled as dependent variable the results compiled by the investigator from table 1.6 are summarized in the

Table 1.7. Results when customer satisfaction is scaled by distance travelled

Variables	Relationship	Sig. at 1% & 5%	Hypothesis	H0 Accepted/Rejected
Age	Negative	Yes	H01a	Rejected
Gender	Negative	No	H01b	Accepted
Marital Status	Positive	No	H01c	Accepted
Income	Positive	Yes	H01d	Rejected
Occupation	Negative	No	H01e	Accepted
Place convenience	Negative	Yes	H01f	Rejected
Affordable price level	Negative	Yes	H01g	Rejected
Better quality	Positive	No	H01h	Accepted
Sufficient quantity	Negative	No	H01i	Accepted
Taste	Negative	No	H01j	Accepted
Availability of variety	Positive	No	H01k	Accepted
Courteous behavior of seller	Positive	No	H01l	Accepted
Like to recommend	Negative	No	H01m	Accepted

Note: Results compiled by the author

Table 1.8. Residuals ^(a)

Statistics	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	0.680	3.050	1.94	0.444	100
Residual	-1.180	1.258	0.000	0.570	100
Std. Predicted Value	-2.829	2.492	0.000	1.000	100
Std. Residual	-1.931	2.058	0.000	0.932	100

a. Dependent Variable: Distance travelled

Table 1.8 contains the residual statistics which comprises the un standardized predicted and residual values along with the standardized predicted and standardized residual values. Standardized have a mean of 0 and standard deviation of 1. Thus it means residuals are normally distributed and there are no outliers of significant data points.

LIMITATIONS

The study is only concerned towards 100 customers from local food vendors in Salem city. It is assumed that respondents were honest in answering the questions while the survey was conducted. Moreover the study does not reflect the true picture of overall customer satisfaction from all the mobile food vendors either in Tamil Nadu or whole India.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The main findings of the study based on the response from the customers and analysis of data is present below:-

Majority of the respondents (93 percent) either agree or strongly agree with the statement that the place is convenient to them.

Most of the respondents (90 percent) either agree or strongly agree on the statement that the price of food is affordable to them.

Majority of the respondents (82 percent) either agree or strongly agree with the quality of food provided at mobile food vendors and (79 percent) were satisfied with the quantity of food provided.

Most of the respondent (79 percent) either agree or strongly agree with the statement “better taste of food” and “availability of variety in food”.

Only (51 percent) of the respondents liked the behavior of the seller and (49 percent) were dissatisfied with seller behavior.

Almost (79 percent) of the respondents liked to recommend the seller to others while as (21 percent) did not like to recommend the seller to others.

Factor analysis showed that the diverse variables categorized are the major determinants of customer satisfaction in these outlets. Moreover the linear regression showed that there is huge association between the variables proposed for this study and one variable is directly or indirectly dependent on other. The variables found highly associated with the dependent variable distance travelled are age, income, place convenience and affordable price level.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the observation and findings of the study the researcher suggests the following points to be taken into consideration by the vendor to establish a positive customer satisfaction towards these mobile food outlets.

Be prompting, reliable, courteous and friendly to the recipients, regardless of their temperament.

Maintain a predictable and timely schedule for meal preparation and delivery.

Customers must be given the menu card to choose their food conveniently.

Provide specific directions to each location you will be delivering meals.

The containers or utensils containing food must be properly covered.

Use of hand gloves is mandatory while serving the food.

Don't use same spoon to serve more than one food, instead use separate spoons for serving different foods and try to avoid sneezing on food.

The remaining food must be immediately disposed and not to keep for the other day to serve, ensure cleanliness in the place where the food is served, use of dust bin is compulsory and don't allow stray dogs to come in the area where the food is served.

Enable customers to give their feedback after the food is served.

CONCLUSION

The researcher believes that the current study has contributed to some extent in the developing understanding of the customer satisfaction with mobile food vending services in Salem city. The real success of any organization or business lies in a healthy and sustainable customer base over a really long period of time. A positive harmonization of the mobile food vending business must go along with the 7Ps of marketing namely: product, place, price, process, promotion, people and physical evidence, this may considerably improve up the customers to new heights. But more preventative measure should be taken in terms of compatibility when designing the above mentioned variables of food service marketing. We can also understand that how these factors contribute towards the customer in exhibiting positive behavior and recommend about the service to their peers with a belief that these mobile food outlets deliver with an assertion of superior quality service each and every time.

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