



## Customer Satisfaction Level Towards Food Delivery Services in Malaysia: A Case Study of Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM), Pagoh

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### Abstract

Food delivery service applications have a significant impact on the lifestyle of Malaysians, including students. These applications allow users to order and receive food without having to visit restaurants or food stalls directly. However, some users have expressed dissatisfaction with high delivery fees, unsatisfactory food conditions, and frequent delivery delays. These issues lead to customer dissatisfaction with the services provided. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate customer satisfaction levels with food delivery service applications, particularly among UTHM Pagoh students. The study employs a quantitative methodology with descriptive analysis. Data were collected through an online survey distributed via WhatsApp using the Google Form platform. A total of 300 UTHM Pagoh students participated as respondents in this study. The findings reveal that the majority of customers are satisfied with food delivery services with a mean score of 3.99 categorized as *Satisfied*. This indicates that food delivery services are quite satisfactory for customers. Nevertheless, all agencies providing food delivery services must improve their facilities to ensure customers can utilize the services without complaints thereby advancing the food service sector in Malaysia. This study contributes to the literature by offering empirical data and contextual analysis that are relevant to consumer behavior in Malaysia and contribute significantly to overall economic growth potency.

**Keywords:** Food delivery applications · Pagoh · Customer satisfaction level · UTHM students

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### BACKGROUND

In this modern era, Malaysia has experienced significant changes particularly in the management of online food purchases through food delivery service applications (Hazilah, 2021). Food delivery services refer to services that deliver food to the customer's chosen location for a certain fee which can be paid online or via the Cash On Delivery (COD) method. Along with the development of information and communication technology (ICT), the food and beverage industry has introduced new innovations by offering online food delivery methods (Chai & Yat, 2019). This method has become a favorite as product information is readily

available in the applications facilitating interactions between sellers and buyers beyond time and geographical limitations (Kimes, 2011). Furthermore, food delivery services have grown rapidly since the COVID-19 pandemic which pushed Malaysians to adapt to the new norm. Daily life and activities changed significantly and one of the sectors affected by the pandemic was food delivery services both in urban and rural areas. Food delivery services involve institutions, agencies, or certain parties that provide delivery of food and beverages ordered online for a certain fee to the customers. The COVID-19 pandemic influenced this sector particularly in terms of time management, health, safety, and facilities. Based on research, food delivery services began to receive attention at the onset of the pandemic in Malaysia (Zakwan, et al., 2021).

Additionally, one of the advantages of this service is the reduction in costs and increased profitability. Many restaurants have started utilizing food delivery service providers for online food delivery (See-Kwong et al., 2017). In Malaysia, various agencies provide food delivery services such as FoodPanda, GrabFood, Lalamove, and others. However, some agencies have received complaints from customers. One major issue is the high service charges and delays in delivering the ordered food. Based on a report by *Berita Harian Online* some agencies impose service fees of up to 20-38 percent (Salim, 2021). Furthermore, *Sinar Harian* reported a widely discussed case where food delivery charges reached RM20, despite the distance between the house and the restaurant being less than 5 km (Kasim, 2020). These high delivery costs discourage customers from using services from certain agencies while other agencies offer more affordable prices. Another concern is the halal status and hygiene of the food delivery services. The Malaysian Ministry of Health through the Food Safety and Quality Division introduced the Food Safety Guidelines for Online Food Products on April 24, 2020. These guidelines emphasize that delivered food must arrive quickly, be safe for consumption, and free from contamination (Ali, 2021). Due to these various issues the usage of food delivery services has been disrupted. For instance, e-hailing drivers earn low incomes due to reduced demand. Recently, GrabFood Malaysia announced changes in payment rates for drivers sparking concerns about their declining income. Many

drivers must work hard to meet daily needs (Muda, 2024). Additionally, during the implementation of the Movement Control Order (MCO) due to COVID-19 people tended to prefer shopping for daily necessities directly at stores rather than using food delivery services. This is because online product prices are perceived as more expensive than in-store prices. On the other hand, food delivery services also have benefits, such as saving money and energy depending on the type of food ordered. For individuals who are busy and rarely cook these services are the best solution as they eliminate the need to buy ingredients and cook. Additionally, customers can avoid traffic congestion which is common in major cities. Even for short distances traffic can take up to 30 minutes not to mention the time spent searching for parking spaces. Based on these issues, this study aims to assess customer satisfaction levels with food delivery service applications specifically among UTHM students in Pagoh.

### Literature Review

Food delivery services refer to institutions, restaurants, or certain parties that provide ready-to-eat food and beverages for consumption either on-site or outside the workplace. In Malaysia, this business is rapidly growing especially in urban areas where people tend to use online food delivery services. Many previous studies have discussed the use of online food delivery services. Among them is the study by Jannatul 'Agilah Said and Narimah Samat (2021) titled "*Tendencies of Using Online Food Delivery Services in Penang*". Their study conducted in Penang revealed that traffic congestion, limited parking spaces, busy work schedules, and lifestyle changes due to urbanization are factors driving residents to use online food delivery services. A study by Taylor and Fink (2003) and Sakaran et al. (2020) found that changes in mobility patterns are influenced by external and internal factors, including economic, geographical, policy, and agency service factors. Among the most notable external factors are geographical issues such as the non-strategic location of stores, limited parking spaces, and traffic congestion, which increase the use of online food ordering (See-Kwong et al., 2017). Research by Nur Aneesa Amran (2022) highlights five factors affecting service quality to improve customer satisfaction and loyalty to food delivery services: safety, communication, reliability, responsiveness, and delivery. Additionally, the accuracy of information

significantly influences user satisfaction (Flavian & Guinaliu, 2006). The use of food delivery services is not only driven by location factors and service quality but also by lifestyle changes among the population (Zulkarnain et al., 2015). In the study by Hsu et al. (2007), it was found that many convenience stores use online food delivery services to deliver perishable goods to business operators taking into account delivery time to ensure the goods arrive on time and in good condition. Meanwhile, the study by Habib, Abu Dardak, and Zakaria (2011) revealed that safety, taste, and speed of service are the main factors in purchasing fast food ordered online. Another study by Shaharudin, Mansor, and Elias (2011) stated that customers' tendencies to order food online are influenced by food freshness, presentation, and taste. These past studies largely focused on factors influencing service quality to improve customer satisfaction and loyalty to food delivery services. Moreover, most of them concentrated on a single state specifically Penang. Research in other regions of Malaysia including suburban or rural areas remains limited. Many studies tend to discuss the population in general without specific attention to particular groups, such as university students, workers, or families with young children. Therefore, this study aims to address the research gap by focusing on university students residing in Pagoh, Johor.

**METHODS**

In this study a quantitative method was employed to identify customer satisfaction levels with food delivery services in Malaysia. Quantitative research was utilized due to its reliance on statistical data involving more than 10 samples for variable measurement in each study (Nordin & Hassan, 2019). The research design adopted a survey method to determine customer satisfaction levels with food delivery services in Malaysia. Furthermore, the sampling technique used was cluster random sampling. This quantitative study was conducted through questionnaires and Google Forms that were distributed to respondents. The questionnaire targeted respondents who had used food delivery services specifically focusing on 300 respondents selected through purposive sampling consisting of UTHM Pagoh students.

The questionnaire comprised three (3) sections to be answered by respondents: Sections A, B, and C.

Section A: Respondent demographic data. This section collected background information such as gender, age, ethnicity, religion, education level, and faculty.

Section B: Types of services used by respondents. This section offered six choices: FoodPanda, GrabFood, Bekal, ShopeeFood, Misi, and others. It also included questions about the frequency of using food delivery services, with four frequency options provided.

Section C: This section contained 15 questions aimed at examining respondents' satisfaction levels with food delivery services. A 5-point Likert scale was used, where scale 1 represented *very dissatisfied (VDS)*, scale 2 *dissatisfied (DS)*, scale 3 *neutral (N)*, scale 4 *satisfied (S)*, and scale 5 *very satisfied (VS)*.

Data collection was conducted through WhatsApp by involving students from higher education institutions as respondents. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to analyze the data. The data were collected in terms of percentages and frequencies using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive analysis was conducted to present mean scores and standard deviations which were used to explain respondent demographics, satisfaction questionnaire responses, and the food delivery services utilized. The scale range used for interpretation is shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** Mean score range

Scale	Description
1.00 - 1.80	Very Dissatisfied
1.81 - 2.60	Dissatisfied
2.61 - 3.40	Neutral
3.41 - 4.20	Satisfied
4.21 - 5.00	Very Satisfied

Source: Alias (1999)

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This section discusses the results obtained from the descriptive analysis of the study respondents.

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**Section A: Respondents' demographic data**

The demographic data of respondents in this study were categorized based on gender, age, ethnicity, religion, and education level. Table 2 shows the demographic data of respondents.

Table 2 below indicates that out of the 300 students involved in this study, 220 respondents were male (73.33%), while 80 respondents were female (26.67%). In terms of age, the table shows that students aged 18-21 years accounted for 129 respondents (43.00%), students aged 22-24 years were 156 respondents (52.00%), and students aged 25 years and above were 15 respondents (5.00%). For ethnicity, the table shows that Malay students

constituted the highest number of respondents totaling 245 students (81.67%) followed by Chinese students with 38 respondents (12.67%), Indian students with 13 respondents (4.33%), and other ethnicities with 4 respondents (1.33%). The table also indicates that the majority of respondents were Muslim totaling 247 respondents (82.33%), followed by Buddhists with 20 respondents (6.67%), Christians with 15 respondents (5.00%), Hindus with 13 respondents (4.33%), and other religions with 5 respondents (1.67%). Furthermore, Table 2 shows that undergraduate students made up the highest number of respondents totaling 252 respondents (84.00%), while the smallest group was PhD students, with 0 respondents (0.00%).

**Table 2.** Respondents' demographic information

Background	Details	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	220	73.33
	Female	80	26.67
Age	18 – 21 years	129	43.00
	22 – 24 years	156	52.00
	25 years and above	15	5.00
Ethnicity	Malay	245	81.67
	Chinese	38	12.67
	Indian	13	4.33
	Others	4	1.33
Religion	Islam	247	82.33
	Buddhist	20	6.67
	Hindu	13	4.33
	Christian	15	5.00
	Others	5	1.67
Education Level	Diploma	43	14.33
	Bachelor's degree	252	84.00
	Master's degree	5	1.67
	Phd	0	0.00

**Section B: Customer satisfaction level with food delivery services in Malaysia: A case study of UTHM, Pagoh**

Types of Food Delivery Services Used Among UTHM Students, Pagoh

Table 3 below shows that out of 300 students, 146 students (48.67%) used FoodPanda, 88 students (29.33%) used GrabFood, 24 students (8.00%) used Bekal, 20 students (6.67%) used ShopeeFood, 7 students (2.33%) used Misi, and 15 students (5.00%) reported using all services. This indicates that most students preferred using FoodPanda compared to other services because it is convenient

for ordering food. According to Gan (2022), research conducted on 104 respondents revealed that the majority of respondents (96.2%) ordered food through smartphones while a small number (3.8%) used websites making FoodPanda easy to use for users. Furthermore, during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic FoodPanda seized the opportunity by implementing various initiatives to promote its services such as introducing new pricing strategies and improving service quality which helped FoodPanda dominate the global industry (Gan, 2022).

**Table 3.** Types of food delivery services most frequently used

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Type of Food Delivery Service	Frequency	Percentage (%)
FoodPanda	146	48.67
GrabFood	88	29.33
Bekal	24	8.00
ShopeeFood	20	6.67
Misi	7	2.33
All	15	5.00

**Frequency of students using food delivery services**

Table 4 below shows that out of 300 students, within a month 134 students (44.67%) used the service 1-3 times, 104 students (34.67%) used it 4-6 times, 42 students (14.00%) used it 7-9 times, and 20 students (6.67%) used it 10 or more times within a month. This indicates that most students use the service only occasionally and not very frequently. According to Yogi Tri Prasetyo et al (2021), most food delivery service users admitted to using the applications mainly for personal satisfaction influenced by the environment they live in. Additionally, users acknowledged that they spend more money on food delivery services

than purchasing items directly from stores as they rarely shop in person and are attracted by the promotions offered by food delivery services. Furthermore, Yogi Tri Prasetyo et al (2021) also stated that if users find the price of the food ordered through a delivery service to be expensive, they are likely to cancel the order even though they initially intended to use the service.

**Table 4.** Frequency of food delivery service usage

Frequency of Usage (per month)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 – 3 times	134	44.67
4 – 6 times	104	34.67
7 – 9 times	42	14.00
10 or more times	20	6.67

**Section C: Customer satisfaction level**

Table 5 below shows that the highest mean score is for item 12, "Halal food is easily available" which scored 4.20. Meanwhile, the lowest mean score is for item 15, "The company rarely offers discounts during purchases" which scored 3.78. The overall mean score for Food Delivery services is 3.99 categorized as "Satisfied." This indicates that Food Delivery services are generally quite satisfactory for customers.

**Table 5.** Food delivery services

No	Item	Frequency (%)					Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
		VDS	DS	N	S	VS			
1	All types of food offered meet customers' tastes.	4	15	47	142	92	4.01	0.886	Satisfied
		(1.3)	(5.0)	(15.7)	(47.3)	(30.7)			
2	Order cancellations by riders occur suddenly with or without reason.	4	31	53	107	105	3.93	1.029	Satisfied

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			(1.3)	(10.3)	(17.7)	(35.7)	(35.0)		
3	Ordered food always arrives on time.	3	15	57	127	105	4.01	0.900	Satisfied
			(1.0)	(5.0)	(19.0)	(42.3)	(32.7)		
4	The food and beverages offered in the app are limited.	4	17	46	124	109	4.06	0.929	Satisfied
			(1.3)	(5.7)	(15.3)	(41.3)	(36.3)		
5	Riders are friendly, polite, and cooperative.	4	10	43	131	112	4.12	0.870	Satisfied
			(1.3)	(3.3)	(14.4)	(43.7)	(37.3)		
6	The product prices offered by the company are expensive compared to other agencies.	4	15	54	114	113	4.06	0.936	Satisfied
			(1.3)	(5.0)	(18.0)	(38.0)	(37.7)		
7	The quality of food received matches the advertisements, fresh and warm.	3	14	65	122	96	3.98	0.903	Satisfied
			(1.0)	(4.6)	(21.7)	(40.7)	(32.0)		
8	Damage to purchased products occurs upon delivery.	4	26	54	110	106	3.96	1.001	Satisfied
			(1.3)	(8.7)	(18.0)	(36.7)	(35.3)		
9	The delivery process is very fast.	5	11	58	126	100	4.02	0.909	Satisfied
			(1.7)	(3.7)	(19.3)	(42.0)	(33.3)		
10	"Mix-order" or incorrect orders due to seller/rider mistakes occur.	4	31	57	103	105	3.91	1.034	Satisfied
			(1.3)	(10.3)	(19.0)	(34.4)	(35.0)		
11	Delivery charges are reasonable.	4	17	63	127	89	3.93	0.923	Satisfied
			(1.3)	(5.7)	(21.0)	(42.3)	(29.7)		
12	Halal food is easily available.	3	15	37	110	135	4.20	0.910	Satisfied
			(1.0)	(5.0)	(12.3)	(36.7)	(45.0)		

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13	The food delivery app functions well and rarely "crashes."	5	14	57	119	105	4.02	0.938	Satisfied
		(1.6)	(4.7)	(19.0)	(39.7)	(35.0)			
14	Food choices are often "out of order."	3	30	55	109	103	3.93	1.008	Satisfied
		(1.0)	(10.0)	(18.4)	(36.3)	(34.3)			
15	The company rarely offers discounts during purchases.	3	26	84	109	78	3.78	0.964	Satisfied
		(1.0)	(8.7)	(28.0)	(36.3)	(26.0)			
Overall Mean Score: 3.99									Satisfied

Source: Field Study (2024)

Based on the table above, the majority of students are satisfied with the Food Delivery services they use. This is evident from the overall mean score of 3.99 which indicates a "Satisfied" level. However, when looking at individual items the highest mean score is for the item "Halal food is easily available" with a score of 4.20. This is because many halal food vendors are available and included in Food Delivery services as the majority of users of these services are Muslims. Halal food is easily accessible through food delivery platforms as they offer a variety of halal restaurant options. The growing Muslim population in Malaysia, which reached 2.08 billion and accounted for 60.6% in 2014 has led to rapid growth in the halal industry and made halal issues a significant concern for consumers (Yuhanis & Vui, 2012). Users can easily find the halal food they want without having to search for it outside. In addition, these applications provide convenience in ordering and delivering food to customers' locations without the need to leave their homes. According to Roh and Park (2019), most merchants using food delivery services are restaurants located in areas surrounded by commercial lots, colleges, entertainment venues, and food stalls. There are also merchants located far from customers' areas making food delivery services beneficial for both customers and merchants.

From the table above, it is evident that item 15, "The company rarely offers discounts during purchases" has the lowest mean score compared to other items with a score of 3.78. According to Mamat and Ramlan (2021), the cost of food and

delivery offered through food delivery platforms is higher compared to buying directly from stores. For instance FoodPanda's platform charges a commission on every food item sold leading to higher total purchase costs. Companies managing food delivery services may rarely offer discounts during purchases due to several factors. First, their operational costs might be high due to complex technological infrastructure, labor expenses, and logistical costs making it challenging to provide significant discounts without sacrificing profits. Additionally, intense competition in the food delivery market may also influence the decision not to offer excessive discounts. Companies may focus on other strategies such as better promotions and improved customer service. Although discounts are not frequently offered, food delivery companies sometimes provide special promotions or discount codes during specific events as part of their marketing strategy to increase market share or attract new customers.

Based on the study conducted, food delivery services play a significant role in the lifestyle of Malaysians particularly among UTHM Pagoh students. At least, the significant role in the lifestyle are the changes in dietary patterns and an increase in sedentary behavior. Food service applications allow users to order food without needing to leave their homes or go to restaurants, which directly transforms consumption patterns from traditional (dine-in or takeaway) to digital-based consumption. For students, this means they can save time, avoid queues, and still get access to a wide variety of food options. The ease of accessing food without the

need for physical movement has the potential to encourage a more passive or sedentary lifestyle, particularly among university students who spend a significant amount of time on academic activities indoors. The lifestyle of UTHM Pagoh students, as investigated in this research, reveals a transformation towards a digital and practical way of living, albeit one fraught with challenges. They are becoming part of a society increasingly reliant on technology for basic needs such as food, yet simultaneously growing more critical of the quality of services they receive. This context indirectly reflects that food delivery services are not merely a service, but a symbol of the changing lifestyle of the younger generation in Malaysia, which is becoming more modern, instant, and digitally-driven.

### CONCLUSION

Based on this study, it can be concluded that food delivery services play a significant role in the lifestyle of Malaysians particularly among UTHM Pagoh students. Overall, customer satisfaction with these services falls under the "Satisfied" category with an overall mean score of 3.99. This study reveals that the majority of students prefer FoodPanda over other platforms due to its convenience, comprehensive selection of halal food options, and occasional promotions. This aligns with the predominantly Muslim population in Malaysia making halal food availability a key factor in attracting customers. However, the study also highlights some challenges faced by customers such as high delivery costs and the infrequent availability of discounts offered by service providers. These factors lead to some level of dissatisfaction, especially when the cost of food ordered online is significantly higher compared to purchasing directly from stores. On the other hand, the primary advantage of food delivery services lies in the convenience they offer, such as saving time, energy, and avoiding traffic congestion. This makes these services an ideal solution for busy individuals who rarely cook while also providing significant benefits to small businesses in remote locations by enabling them to reach customers more easily. Therefore, it is recommended that food delivery service providers continue to improve service quality, ensure more competitive pricing, and offer more promotions or incentives to customers. By implementing these measures, the food delivery service sector in Malaysia has the potential to grow further, enhance customer satisfaction, and contribute significantly to overall economic growth.

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