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The Effect of Critical Success Factors (CSF) on Food and Beverage Micro Businesses in Malaysia: A Conceptual Paper

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Abstract

The failure rate of SMEs in Malaysia is worrying, with 60% of new SMEs failing within five years of operation, showing that they are facing major issues with numerous challenges to survive in the competitive market. From this perspective the main purpose of this study is to determine the effect of critical success factors on food and beverage micro-business in Kuala Lumpur. Specifically, this study will determine if critical success factors of reputation of the brand, excellence of customer service, reliable delivery, and product innovation influence the success of food and beverage micro-business. A self-administered questionnaire will be distributed to the food and beverage micro-business owner in Kuala Lumpur area for data collection. Correlation and regression analysis will be used for data analysis to determine the relationship of the variables. The findings are hoped to show a positive relationship between critical success factors, reputation of the brand, excellence of customer service, reliable delivery, and product innovation with the success of street vendors. The outcome of this study is expected to contribute to presenting precise and clear understanding of the critical success factors in the food and beverage micro-business survival and success in Kuala Lumpur.

Keywords: Critical Success Factor, Food and Beverage Micro Business

Introduction

Critical success factors (CSF) can be defined as the specific activities, procedures that a business entity depends on for its existence or survival (Sivashanker, 2021). Additionally, Tsiga et al (2016) stated that critical success factors are the key areas of activities that have favourable outcomes that are necessary for managers to achieve the goals. Furthermore, Ahmad et. al (2018) mentioned that the theory of CSF is highly instrumental in any field to identify the factors that are critical for business success. Moreover, CSF not only can be used in one sector but can be applied in wide projects in different sectors, and eventually, the achievement of critical success factors ensures positive outcomes (Tsiga et al., 2016).

Consequently, CSF can enhance the success of the business (Al-Atit et. Al., 2019). According to Janica (2019), it can be inferred that there is a close relationship between business failure and business performance (positive or negative) or business success. Meanwhile, Alfoqahaa (2018) defined success as profit and growth for traditional criteria, and personal satisfaction and sense of achievement for intrinsic factors. Further, success is also defined as the growth and financial performance of a firm, thus, the performance is essential to be measured to ensure the success of the business. For business success, commitment, control, and challenge are perceived as top contributors by owners (Smith, 2015). Alfoqahaa (2018) pointed that although many studies have been conducted about something that is related to the failed and fruitfulness of micro, small and medium enterprise (MSMEs), but research more specifically on Critical Success Factors (CSF) for MSMEs is narrow and the invention are yet undetermined. Prior study, generally describing what contributed to the failure of MSMEs, attempting to identify the factors that impact these failures, and discussing how to avoid these factors in order to lessen the likelihood of failure (Anggraeni & Selamat, 2021). To date, CSF research for MSMEs has received little attention in Malaysia.

The Covid-19 has impacted the world, specifically in Malaysia it has weakened the country business environment with business closure and unemployment (Hasanat et al., 2020). Consequently, the high unemployment has led to the increase of food and beverage micro businesses operating within the area of Kuala Lumpur (Adam, 2020). In supporting this claims, Bernama (2021) has reported as the unemployment has led people to open up the stall and operating on the roadside and this is confirmed by Datuk Seri Rosli Sulaiman the president of Federal Territory Bumiputera Petty Traders Association, following the lifting of restrictions imposed during the MCO, small businesses have been “springing up like mushrooms after the rain” in the city. In addition, in the emerging country, the rising of hawkers might contribute to create the SMEs (Aun, 2021). Small and Medium Enterprise Corporation Malaysia (SMEcorp) identifies small-medium enterprises (SMEs), as micro-enterprises, petty traders, and hawkers within the subset of enterprises in Malaysia. Ambad et al (2020) highlighted it is one of the backbones of the Malaysian economy, SMEs make up 98.5 percent of the total businesses, or approximately 907,065; SMEs provide 66 percent of employment, contribute 37.1 percent of Malaysia’s GDP, and 17.3% of the total export. Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) has promoted various programs and grants to boost their performance.

Eventually, due to their nature, food and beverage SMEs are considered as a competitive business as it attracts more vendors in the market (Chang et al., 2020). Thus, to reduce the failure rate of business among the newly operated business, a careful examination of how current vendors survive and retain businesses in the market is critical. The constant challenge of food and beverage SMEs is to maintain current customers and make new customers (Bakar & Farinda, 2012). As the failure rate of SMEs in Malaysia is worrying, with 60% of new SMEs failing within five years of operation, showing that they are facing major issues with numerous challenges to being competitive in the market (Ahmad & Seet, 2009; Khalique, 2011). Furthermore, only 4 out of 10 SMEs are able to successfully face the challenges of growth (Ambad et al, 2020) . To sum up, the study will also aim to serve not only the business owner in identifying the important success criteria for their business success, but also the authorities or ministries, academics, and future researchers in improving and comprehending the topic better for future studies, it will most likely assist SMEs business owners in learning how to lower the probability of company failure.

Research Objectives

The objective of this study is to identify the critical success factors and how it can help the food and beverage micro businesses to be successful and retain in the market during the current situation.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to achieve these research objectives

1. To examine the effect of critical success factors on the food and beverage micro businesses success.
2. To examine the effect of reputation of the brand on the food and beverage micro businesses success.
3. To examine the effect of excellence of customer service on the food and beverage micro businesses success.
4. To examine the effect of reliable delivery on the food and beverage micro businesses success.
5. To examine the effect of product innovation on the food and beverage micro businesses success.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives, this study is to answer these research questions:

1. Do the critical success factors influence the food and beverage micro businesses success?
2. Does the reputation of the brand influence the food and beverage micro businesses success?
3. Does the excellence of customer service influence the food and beverage micro businesses success?
4. Does reliable delivery influence the food and beverage micro businesses success?
5. Does the product innovation influence the food and beverage micro businesses success?

Theoretical Framework

Figure 1 refers to the theoretical framework in this study. The independent variable is the critical success factors which have four determinants which are reputation of the brand, excellence of customer service, reliable delivery, and product innovation. The dependent variable in this study is the success of street vendors. The current framework is adapted from Alfoqahaa (2018) on critical success factors.

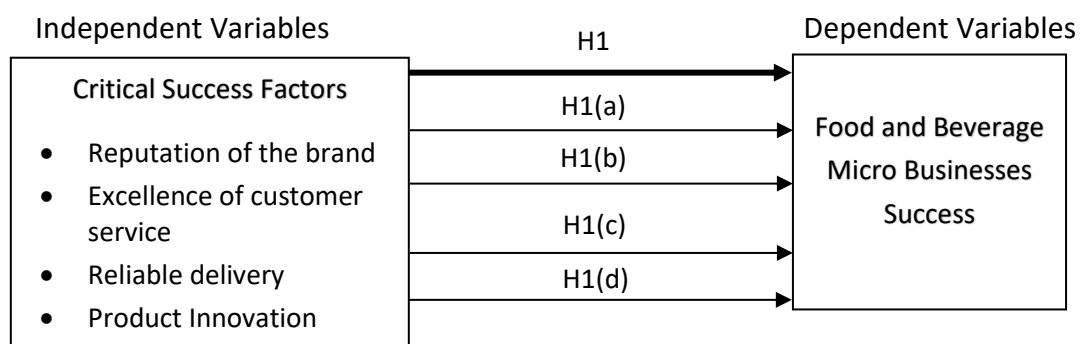


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

The paper is organized as follows. The following section provides a literature review on Critical Success Factors and their use. Then, the proposed research method is described.

Literature Review

Critical Success Factors

Critical success factors have been and continue to be focus of researchers in different areas (Al-Atit et al., 2019). Theory of critical success factors crucial to identify the factors that are critical to success in any field (Ahmad et al., 2018). Besides, Tsiga et al (2016) stated that critical success factors can be applied in wide projects from different sectors. Thus, some research has been done to identify critical success factors in SMEs (Alfoqahaa, 2018; Al-Atit et al., 2019; Sivashanker, 2021). Besides, Tsiga et al (2016) conduct a study on critical success factors in the construction industry. There is more research has been done on the topic of critical success factors from different industry such as manufacturing industry (Bhatia et al., Nwaiwu et al., 2020; Pozzi et al., 2021), maritime industry (Zhou et al., 2020), and more. Sivashanker (2021) refers critical success factors as “the specific activities, procedures that a business entity depends on for its existence or survival”. Tsiga et. al (2016) reported that critical success factors are the key areas of activities that have favourable outcomes that are necessary for managers to achieve the goals. Besides, critical success factors imply a 15-causal relationship between perceived value or relative cost and a resource or skill (Alfoqahaa, 2018). Moreover, achievement of critical success factors ensures positive outcomes (Tsiga et al., 2016).

Additionally, Alfoqahaa (2018) has determined the four critical success factors that have been tested which are brand reputation, excellence of customer service, reliable delivery, and product innovation. The study has highlighted, the brand reputation, excellence of customer service, and reliable delivery are strongly influence the success of SMEs, meanwhile, product innovation weakly affected the success. Similarly, research by Al-Atit et al (2019), has identify critical success factors in SMEs in the sustainability perspective in Saudi Arabia. However, the variables determine for critical success factors tested in the study is different which are individual factors, characteristics of the business, management factors, support of business, availability of capital, and environment of business. The result of the findings shows that four factors significantly influence the success of SMEs which are individual factors, support of business, management factors, and availability of capital.

Reputation of the Brand

Ying et al (2021) said that branding is considered as a method of developing and forming a brand in the minds of customers to give value to those goods or services, organizations, and corporations. Besides, brand reputation is the overall performance of the company which is built in its mission and vision statement, and it is significant for a brand to have a good reputation to be profitable and successful (Mahmood et al., 2018). It is noted that brand reputation is one of the key drivers of a business success is building a successful brand in the competitive market (Mokhtar et al., 2018). Khan et al (2021) stated that for companies, brand equity has emerged as a source competitive advantage.

In Malaysia, it is easy to see in the Malaysian food and beverage SMEs with different brand names but providing similar products in Malaysia. The local food or heritage food such as Nasi Kandar, Asam Laksa, and Nasi Lemak and gastronomic experience a consumer expect will activate a destination (Yuen et al., 2021). Fast food generally described as foods that are served on demand and instantly and Malaysian are considered extremely attached to the fast food such as hamburgers, fried chicken, chips, and other (Xiao et al., 2019). Brand such as

“Ramly” are known and trusted product brands for their business thus encouraging the purchase intention of the consumers as they already have the knowledge of the brand of the products. Consumers are more likely to show positive behavior towards a brand when they are emotionally attached to the brand (Loureiro et al., 2017). Mokhtar et al (2018) mentioned that branding has power to influence the consumer behavior to repurchase and revisit in hospitality industry such as hotel and restaurant. Besides, it is also mentioned in the study by Loureiro and Kaufman (2016) that it is not the perceptions of the products, but consumer perceptions of the company and brand reputation that promote their willingness to buy or recommend products.

Excellence of Customer Service

Singh (2021) stated that food and beverage SMEs are always working to improve and enhance the relationship with the suppliers, consumers, partners, government authorities, other business owners in the area, and colleagues. Customer relationship management (CRM) is defined as the “comprehensive strategy and process of acquiring, retaining, and partnering with selective customers to create superior value for the company and the customer”, thus it is one of the crucial keys for businesses in every field and industries in achieving the ultimate goals of retaining customers and gain better strategic advantages compared to the competitors (Aruna, 2018). Moreover, service quality is considered an added value in culinary business and since there are risks that can cause by unsafe products for consumption, it is necessary to have a supervision by the street vendors on the issue (Manteiro and Maria, 2021). Moreover, starting from the quality of raw materials to food processing and storing and similar steps in process influence the food safety (Ranka, 2020). In addition, Manteiro & Maria (2021) also proposed a standard operating system where it can ensure comfort between the parties concerned which includes the business process of purchasing raw materials, storage of raw materials, production processes, washing tools and materials, packaging, and delivery of finished goods.

Reliable Delivery

Delivery is important since it has power in determining the veracity of information (Ghosh, 2020). Alfoqahaa (2018) explains that logistics can satisfy market needs through distribution processes which include not only the way for products’ delivery to stores but also a choice of type of stores, their location, and sales forms. It is also stated in the study that to improve customer satisfaction, the company needs to identify the expectations of the customer in logistics (Chira & Musetescu, 2016). An unhappy customer who receives late delivery can lead to business loss. Therefore, it is necessary for logistics management maintaining the balance between the financial effort of the business and the service offered to the consumers.

Besides, people shift to online shopping not only because they can exercise convenience, the comfort of their homes, and their own leisure time, but also people value ease and convenience in the use of online food delivery service as it eliminates the frustration of bad traffic and weather (Saad, 2020). In Malaysian market, the food delivery services has gradually developing (Nayan & Hasan, 2020). For a business to be considered having a reliable delivery, the time management in delivery is crucial as customers concerns on service or food that can be prepared relatively fast and delivery attributes ensure credibility and customer satisfaction through the products and services provided (Ghosh, 2020). Moreover, customer satisfaction is influenced by accurate goods delivering and lack of completeness can lead to dissatisfaction

among customers, thus, reliable delivery is a crucial and must be priority for the success of a business (Saad, 2020).

Product Innovation

Innovation is defined as the application of new ideas of products, processes, or any other aspect of the company's activities. Meanwhile, product innovation is explained in the study as the whole process of introducing a new product or service to the market (Alfoqahaa, 2018). Besides, innovation reflects the openness to the new idea which is the culture of an organization, and it will create something to compete (Tarigan, 2018). Aksoy (2017) defines innovation as a compulsory component of competitiveness that compasses the new or improved product or process, new organizational behavior in business practices, and a new marketing approach. If a business wants to be successful in a tight competition environment, it needs innovation as it constructs the support to business performance (Aksoy, 2017). In addition, innovation should link with the customer's needs, and it is a strong factor behind differences in a company's performance (Alfoqahaa, 2018).

Furthermore, Tarigan (2018) stated that innovation is a process of creativity and interaction. Product creativity is one dimension of innovation where it is crucial for new business as it can provide opportunities in terms of growth, expansion to new areas, and gain competitive advantage (Malkawi & Rumman, 2016). Yunus et al (2018) stated that it is important for firms to respond quickly to competitors' activities. Meanwhile, innovation capability is the ability of the company to improve available technology and create new technology based on available internal and external resources (Aksoy, 2017). Knowledge capabilities are correlated with innovation and accelerate new products with less cost and higher quality (Malkawi & Rumman, 2016). Companies with innovation will change the process for better products and eventually will increase the performance of the company (Tarigan, 2018). Innovation has a significant impact on firms' performance (Aksoy, 2017). In the context of food and beverage SMEs, some innovations that they use to enhance the performance of the business are by using QR codes, packaging system, and social media marketing. Firstly, Quick Response code (QR code) is a matrix code where it is widely used to encode types of information and it is applied in various field (Son et al., 2019). Within the line Hajazi et al (2021) added that, mobile ordering system and payment is considered as one of major alternative payments that is used in various application and situations.

Business Success

Much research has been done on the contributions of success or failure of SMEs (Alfoqahaa, 2018; Deb Nath & Deb Nath, 2019; Lee et al., 2020). Alfoqahaa (2018), stated that success is defined as profit and growth for traditional criteria, and personal satisfaction and sense of achievement for intrinsic factors. Furthermore, growth, and profitability that is categorized as financial success, whereas survival goal, and lifestyle success can be categorized as non-financial success (Steffens & Fitzsimmons, 2012). Meanwhile, Makarenko et al (2019) proposed some elements of success in business which are in-depth knowledge of the subject area of business, clear goals of the business, innovative ideas, system business that involves transparency, the competence of staff selection, and realism of the business. Besides, Sherman (2019) stated that a business success is measured based on individual, environmental or organizational factors and government support which can be divided into internal and external factors. In addition, the success of a business is not only achieved by

people who have economic knowledge of the management, but also by people who have a strong mentality or philosophy of success (Makarenko et al., 2019).

Relationship Between Critical Success Factors and Business Success

Critical success factors can ensure the sustainability of the business. Besides, it is found that critical success factors can enhance the success of the business. As explained in the study, to adopt a proper strategy by businesses and organizations to enhance the success of the projects, the critical success factors are crucial and helpful (Al-Atit et al., 2019). Sivashanker (2021) stated in the study that for a business to prevent short-term failure, critical success factors are significant. In addition, the study further explains that it is not only the critical success factors variable that can forecast expected outcomes for a business but also play an important role in the sustainability of the small business. The sustainability of a business is one of the pieces of evidence that an entrepreneur efficiently uses critical success factors to retain the business for a long time (Sivashanker, 2021).

Based on previous studies on critical success factors, the findings show that the critical success factor for the business (Alfoqahaa, 2018; Al-Atit et al., 2019; Sivashanker, 2021). Alfoqahaa (2018) conducted a study to determine the impact of critical success factors of SMEs in Palestine. From the findings, it is found that brand reputation excellence of customer service, and reliable delivery strongly influence the success of SMEs, meanwhile, innovation is weakly associated.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive research design using a quantitative approach with a structured questionnaire as the research instrument through a cross-sectional study (Creswell, 2014). Sekaran and Bougie (2010) describe descriptive research design as undertaken to ascertain and able to shows the characteristics of the variables of interest in a situation. It is causal in nature whereby it is to determine the cause and effect of variables that influence each other (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). In addition, a cross-sectional study is undertaken in which data are gathered to answer the research questions and the data is obtained either just once, perhaps over a period of days or weeks, or months (Kabir, 2016).

Population and Samples

The population in this study was the licensed food and beverage micro businesses in the Kuala Lumpur area. Kuala Lumpur will be chosen as the area of study due to its urban development with high concentration of food and beverage micro businesses. The population of the operators in the Kuala Lumpur area is kept in the system of Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL). The appropriate sample size will be measured using the G Power calculation to get the minimum number of respondents needed for the study. Chaokromthong and Sintao (2021) stated that G-Power is suitable and calculate a smaller number of respondents needed compared to other methods and formula. Respondents' criteria for this study will be the owner of a food and beverage micro business, must be at least 18 years old, and is registered and licensed from the Kuala Lumpur City Hall. Therefore, with the sample criteria set up is to avoid inaccuracy and credibility in the data collection.

Instrumentation Development

Connell et al (2018), highlighted that it is important to construct an instrumentation to measure content validity and face validity. In addition, it is also stated that content validity is the key component of the measure development. The study will adapt instrument by Alfoqahaa (2018) for data collection. The instrument will be divided into 4 sections.

Section	Variables	Number of items	Scale	Sources
A	Demographic profile	6 items	1. Nominal with order	Alfoqahaa, (2018)
B	Independent Variable		1. Strongly Disagree	Alfoqahaa, (2018)
	1. Reputation of the brand	5 items	2. Disagree	
	2. Excellence of customer service	6 items	3. Neutral	
	3. Reliable delivery	4 items	4. Agree	
	4. Product Innovation	5 items	5. Strongly Agree	
C	Dependent Variable: Street vendors Success	5 Item	1. Strongly Disagree	Alfoqahaa, (2018)
			2. Disagree	
			3. Neutral	
			4. Agree	
			5. Strongly Agree	

Pilot Test & Plan for Data Collection

Pilot test is to test whether the question is reliable and understandable to the respondent (Bujar et al., 2019). It will be done by distributing the questionnaire to 30 respondents within the same criteria in other areas. The validity and reliability of the instrument will also be tested via expert review. To collect the data, the researcher will go to the business personally and pass the hard copy to the owner. The overall questionnaire design will be designed to be short and simple. It will be easily understandable with a completion time of 5 - 10 minutes. This is hope to convince the owner of the business making them cooperate in the process of data collection.

Plans For Data Analysis

The data analysis will be conducted using the SPSS IBM software. Since this is a causal design study, a multiple regression analysis will also be conducted for this study. It is to find the causal effect relationship between variables. Multiple regression is a common form of linear regression analysis, and usually used to explain the relationship between dependent variables and two or more independent variables.

Expected Findings

The findings are hoped to show a positive relationship between critical success factors, reputation of the brand, excellence of customer service, reliable delivery, and product innovation with the success of street vendors. The outcome of this study is expected to contribute to presenting precise and clear understanding of the critical success factors in the food and beverage micro-business survival and success in Kuala Lumpur.

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