

# Is Going Viral a Good Thing?

## A Study on Social Media Information and Service Quality Towards Cafes in Ipoh

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### ABSTRACT

Social media are interactive computer tool that allows people to share ideas, opinions, and data by creating virtual connections and societies. It has been estimated that there are approximately 3.8 billion active social media users. Consequently, this research investigates the link between social media information and customer loyalty and the association between service quality and customer loyalty. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between satisfaction, social media information, and service quality and assess the role of customer satisfaction in moderating the link between social media information and customer loyalty, service quality, and customer loyalty. This research will focus on social media information, service quality (SERVQUAL), customer happiness, customer loyalty, and social media users towards cafes in Ipoh, Perak. It investigates how the cafe owners evaluate what is essential from customers' ideas and how service quality may be improved by analysing the cafe's quality of service. Additionally, the study is crucial to observe customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Therefore, the study will take the form of a field experiment, with questionnaires sent to consumers who visited any Ipoh Café after seeing it become popular on social media in the previous two years. Moreover, since each respondent's response is handled as a separate data source, the unit of analysis for this research will be subjective.

**Keywords:** *Social Media, Social Media Information, Service Quality, Satisfaction, Café, Ipoh.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, technological advances have made social media platforms convenient for mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets to access information [1]. Examples of social media are Instagram, Youtube, Twitter, and Facebook [2]. Moreover, media-induced is no longer new in tourism (e.g., film, television), but social networks appear more unexpected and significant to tourism [3]. For example, tourism is driven by social media-originated when unknown attractions that are unexpected become viral [4]. Another example, several geo-tagged pictures on Instagram famous almost quickly made Delta Lake a hotspot and viral in Grand Teton National Park [5].

Consequently, people depend on social media to revision travelling to gain inspiration, and social media influencers have played a crucial part in the tourism induced [6]. Social media play a

significant role in determining tourists' decision-making [7]. The reason behind that is, Parahiyanti and Prasasti [8] stated that social media would provide some data throughout the engagement process, and Berhanu and Raj [9] revealed a positive perception of social media and its information.

Moreover, the information itself is the major of the viral content in social media [10]. It is supported by Peco-Torres et al. [11] that mentioned social media information has a positive effect on customer brand engagement. However, some researchers warned that obsession with social media drives business people to alter their information to fit their targeted audience or reader needs [12]. Therefore, social media has become famous among business people as social media can become an information medium to their target audience [13].

For thousands of years, people interestingly participate in visiting a cafe and visiting a cafe presence the new customers' way of living. The form of self-updating comes with concrete proof, particularly the outcomes of status updates on various social media, such as feature stories on Instagram. Nevertheless, the entrance of social media users as the primary target audience for the latest cafes should be accompanied by amenities and other benefits so as not only to satisfy interest but also to preserve their frequency of visits [2].

According to Firmansyah et al. [14], in general, three characteristics, including comfort, cheap rates and good service, are crucial for picking a thousand-year-old cafe. In response to the challenge, nevertheless, cafeterias should now also take more excellent account of the ease of visitors, since nowadays the rivalry is changing to experience that suits the lifestyle of those who now go cafes [15]. This phenomenon inspires café proprietors to think critically, create innovative thoughts for coffee, and draw consumers to visit [16].

On a different note, attributes such as participation, conversation, and persuasion influence Generation Y's intention to share and behave in sharing travel photos. Findings from Ihsanuddin & Anuar [17] found that not all attributes influenced Generation Y's intention and behaviour in sharing travel photos. Furthermore, to relate to viral café on Instagram, the study found no mediation effect of intention to share travel photos toward the relationship between Instagram communications attributes and Generation Y's sharing travel photo behaviour. Therefore, at the end of this research, the social media information and the service quality will be determined to preserve the customer loyalty associated with customer satisfaction.

### ***1.1 Problem Statement***

The introduction of technology and the internet in the present modern generation has drastically transformed visitors' perspectives. As a result, many tourist guides or even paper maps are no longer valid to find their new location [18]. People generate trust in these social media contents while obtaining information about the destination and eventually assume similar experiences to those from other customers when they comply with those components [19]. Besides, this shows that the

information is not concerned with visitors, whether from friends, family, or colleagues. Narangajavana et al. [19] also stated that another critical conclusion for the tourism sector is that only trust in social media can generate expectations about a tourist location. Besides, the content of the information is more critical so that, if it is viral in a favourable way, favourable anticipation about the destination may be encouraged. Unfavourable anticipation will be encouraged if it is viral in an unfavourable way. Moreover, the business people may also alter the information from social media, which can be different from reality [12]. It is supported by Phillips [20] that stated that the information is produced in a form capable of spreading or going viral. This is crucial since it will eventually lead to customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction [19].

Yousef et al. [21] stated that the satisfaction of consumers has an important influence on loyalty to customers. On another note, Cetin [22] stated that both experiences in visiting the place and service quality impact the satisfaction and loyalty of the customer. It is also supported by Aburayya et al. [23] findings found that there is a relationship between the quality of service and customer satisfaction, and customer satisfaction leads to customers' loyal decisions.

Despite much research on the role of quality of service, there seems to be no study in the cafes in this area, and the various researchers have focused on only one or a few aspects connected to the quality of service [21]. Moreover, one of the latest café research conducted by Intan and Maulida [2] also not focused on service quality, but they studied the marketing mix model towards cafes. Other researchers also had completed the study based on cafes setting. However, they only focus on one specific café that might be different to any available cafes. For example, Anggereni et al. [24] studied Pilona Café in Tangerang City, Ateta et al. [25] studied marketing mix and customer purchase in Malabar Mountain Café, and Barus and Silalahi [26] conducted research at Café Abdullah Lubis, Medan.

Cafes owner needs to decide what is relevant from customers' thoughts and how service quality can be enhanced by assessing the service quality of the cafe. The café providers also need to understand how social media-induced customers to visit as it provides insights about that destination [3]. Kwayu [27] stated that the popularity and widespread use of social media channels such as

Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram had attracted businesses to boost productivity and worth. Furthermore, social media seem essential for companies, and many are trying to establish a social media plan and comprehend its effects on their practices.

## **1.2 Operational Definition**

### *1.2.1 Viral and Viral Marketing*

According to Oxford Dictionary ([www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com)), viral means spread widely and rapidly. In addition to that, Nahon and Hemsley [10] define virality as a piece of social information that is forward or shared simultaneously using social networks over a short period, resulting in the information being exposed to colossal numbers of people. It can be identified as 1) The human and social dimensions of information sharing between individuals; 2) The spread's speed; 3) The reach of the content in terms of the number of individuals exposed to it, and 4) The reach in terms of the distance travelled by information when numerous networks are combined.

Meanwhile, other terms such as viral marketing are also commonly used, and it has the same meaning of virality. Stein et al. [28] stated that the phrase 'viral marketing' has been used in the first place in 1997 to define the usage of Hotmail ads by the 'Draper Fisher Jurvetson' to encourage its free email service. In addition to that, Stein et al. [28] also mentioned that when the content has its social value, it will become viral. Meanwhile, according to Al-Rawi [12], it is a mysterious side of the internet when certain content gains recognition and becomes popular while others with the same content do not spread widely.

### *1.2.2 Social Media*

Based on old definitions, social media is defined as digital technologies that enhance information or engagement created by the user [29] using unique tools for interaction platforms [30]. Unfortunately, the broad concept of social media has often been mistakenly used [31]. Carr [31] also stated that the lack of a consistent yet solid definition is also a significant challenge in future social media studies. Therefore, Carr [31] papers conclude the new definition of social media, which defines social media as an internet-based platform that allows users to engage with wide and narrow audiences that gain value from the material created by users and the perception of how people will interact.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Social Media Information**

In recent years, social media has grown wonderfully, and the data created by the users have accumulated massively [32]. However, as with various sources, social media have the lack systems to ensure quality and give unfiltered to high-quality information. Those with insufficient information produce overloading of information [33]. Instruments in social media enable us to break down geographical obstacles which limit human communication and interaction. It increased the number of e-participation, virtual presence and virtual communities. Dwivedi et al. [34] also supported this statement that people routinely go through intelligent gadgets and post to their social media accounts. Some even choose to speak via social media rather than interacting with one person at a time.

In addition to that, social media also have professional advantages include knowledge exchange, publicity, assistance, and guidance [35]. Besides, the ability of consumers to obtain the information is increased to influence brands in internet communities. At the same time, companies can gain quick feedback and understand personal preferences without observational effects [35] and use them for product innovation [34]. However, communicating via social networks might be more complex because emotions can hardly be detected and understood [34].

Furthermore, people are free to upload their thoughts on social media. This freedom of thought needs to be carefully balanced to guarantee that this behaviour does not commit offence or injury. Besides that, the quality of social media material, from truths to "fake news", is varied. Inexact information may spread all across the globe in a very brief period and can severely impact people's views and attitudes [34]. Wahyudi et al. [36] claim that data from social media infrequently produce value on their own. Social data from many sources, frequently of different quality data, must be connected and integrated. Many companies struggle to enhance the quality of information, and it is a recurrent issue to enhance the quality of social media information.

These statements are also supported by Nahon and Hemsley [10], which they mentioned that virality is crucial as it becomes the gateway of recognition and attention. They also conclude that virality can transform people attitudes and acts. However, Nahon and Hemsley [10] highlight that

viral also can cause injustices as viral means that people spread the information from one person to another person.

## **2.2 Service Quality (SERVQUAL)**

Service quality is the perceptions of the visitor towards the service and what they receive. Based on Parasuraman et al. [37], the definition of service quality is the difference between reality and expectations, and it can be seen from five dimensions: 1) tangibles, 2) reliability, 3) responsiveness, 4) assurance and 5) empathy. The service quality model, SERVQUAL, is generally appropriate and can be applied to different statements [37]. Because its measurements are universal, SERVQUAL is functional across the spectrum of services. SERVQUAL has been used successfully over time, including several tourism industries studies [38], including marketing, healthcare, government, and other corporate activities [39].

### **2.2.1 Tangible**

Tangible issues relate to the existence of equipment, physical equipment, communication, and workers. This measurement represents the look and feel of the group. It indicates quality and transmits the image of a company [40]. According to many experts, tangibles rank first among the principal elements that offer customer loyalty [41]. Albayrak et al. [42] found that tangible components play a more critical role in overall customer satisfaction than intangible components. It is substantially more straightforward to adapt and refresh tangible elements.

### **2.2.2 Reliability**

Berry et al. [43] claimed that reliability is an essential factor, and reliability must remain one of the key elements regardless of service industry's types. Reliability includes proper desire fulfilment, perfect data, accurate declaration in the bill directly, outcomes that are more accurate than commissions and maintain service guarantee [44]. Reliability was described as a potential to provide consumers with reliable, accurate and assured services and their ability to handle customer-related difficulties [45].

According to Kumar [46], as Gopi and Samat [47] mentioned, reliability as a service element ensures consumers are happy with the right and preferential services. This also encourages

increased confidence and loyalty in service providers.

### **2.2.3 Responsiveness**

Responsiveness is the employees' willingness to assist clients and provide timely service [37]. Responsibility is prepared to respond to client support and rapid service requirements and wishes [48]. Moreover, responsiveness was a significant element that counted towards overall customer satisfaction [49]. The vital role of responsiveness in fostering customer satisfaction and its absence leading to customer dissatisfaction is highlighted in many studies on the tourism industry [50].

### **2.2.4 Assurance**

According to Jones and Shandiz [51], as mentioned in Bahadur et al. [52] article, empathy with individuals is considered a significant consideration variable. Research indicates that empathy includes both cognitive and emotional aspects [51]. Besides that, in terms of emotion, empathy concerns the ability of staff to participate in valuable measures to customers such as personal interest and passionate contact [53]. Moreover, it is also supported by Hwang and Kim [54] that empathy relates to the ability of the staff to comprehend consumer perception and sentiments during encounters with service resulting in customer feelings towards the service brand. In the study conducted by Minh et al. [55], empathy was the most significant factor contributing to customer satisfaction.

## **2.3 Customer Loyalty**

Customer loyalty is the customer's behaviour that impacts the same brand goods [56]. Moreover, Oliver [57] believed that consumer loyalty would compel consumers to buy the same brand items in the face of rivals' advantageous deals. Jones and Sasser [58] mentioned that customer loyalty is the behavioural intention in maintaining the relationship between visitors and service suppliers.

A new study conducted by Varshney [59] also confirmed that the connection between customer pleasure and loyalty is favourable. The level of satisfaction of our consumers increases when our clients are pleasant and satisfied with the product or service. The degree of client contentment lowers quickly as if customer loyalty has been adversely affected by the good or service.

## 2.4 Customer Satisfaction

Satisfaction in the tourism industry refers to perceptions and actual experiences, which are emotional after the post-journey [60]. According to Kotler [61], customer satisfaction is an emotion of delight or disappointment after comparing the outcome of products against the expectation. In addition, Kotler et al. [61] also mentioned four methods that can be used to investigate customer satisfaction: system complaints and suggestions, customer satisfaction surveys, ghost shopping, and analysis of lost customers. If performance is under expectation, customers are not satisfied. If performance meets customer expectations, they will be satisfied [61].

The study was also supported by Riyadi and Rangkuti [62] that stated when the client's wishes had been met by the company as anticipated, customers will be pleased. The customer becomes more pleased with the added value of service, and the chance to become a loyal customer would be very high [62]. Moreover, in El-Adly [63] research paper proves that the findings of Lam et al. [64] on the mediating function of customer satisfaction helps further explain the disparity between consumer perceived value and customer loyalty.

The choice of destination, the services and the intention to return are affected by satisfaction. The increased reputation of tourism goods, the destination brand name and loyalty would probably affect high satisfaction levels among tourists [13]. Satisfaction can affect society's intention of buying back and oral advertising. Furthermore, satisfied people tend to be more likely to educate others and share interactions with the services. The best part of ads and advice for positive word of mouth is that service providers do not entail costs [65].

## 2.5 Cafes

A cafe delivers a high-quality care eating company offering service to customers in an informal atmosphere, without applying a general principle or service (as an exclusive restaurant), foodstuff kinds or cheaper costs since they usually run 24 hours a day [66]. Meanwhile, according to Marsum [67], a cafe serves fast food and a casual or informal ambience, but it is also a sort of restaurant that generally sits inside and outdoors. Substantial foods are not performed in most cafes but rather snacks like cakes, sandwiches, stews, and beverages. However, on one side of the cafe is a location where ideas are presented, and the

practical life of time and place and individual individuality is reflected [68].

According to Yuniati et al. [69], viral marketing strategy impacts the attractiveness of interior decorating cafes, visitor evaluations, and the number of customers who want to share images, videos, and posts. Yuniati et al. [69] also mentioned that the cafes suggest meals at cheap costs to guests and a presentation of environment or appealing environment. Selfie fans are happy with the delicate subtleties of the idea of backdrop shots. Both can enhance visitor pleasure using social media for sharing and feedback. Besides, the initial impression of the cafe provides customers pleased that influences appraisal. The guests' assessments and satisfaction 15 are based on their experience at the Instagram-able café as visitors were engaged and incorporated in the high integration approach to persuade other users [69].

In addition to that, there is a highly intriguing appeal for youngsters in the coffee houses or cafes that are rising today. Besides that, Cahyaningtyas and Iqbal [70] research found that university students and millennials were attracted to café because of a new way of life in updating "beautiful" foods on social media. Furthermore, many influencers are being employed to attract young people to visit a cafe, which is quite beneficial. The influence of influencers must surely boost Instagram marketing [2].

Visiting a cafe is one of the underlying aims of proving its presence in the modern millennium way of life. The style of self-updating may be seen in physical proof, mainly status updates in various social media such as stories update on Instagram [2]. Story updates are also free publicity by customers. Besides that, Intan and Maulida (2020) also stated that the location of their cafe is indirectly inquisitive to their followers that want to go to the cafe [2].

## 2.6 Social Media Users in Malaysia

Based on Datareportal Digital 2021: Malaysia, the total number of active social media users in January 2021 is 28 million, which indicates 86% of the total population in Malaysia. This number shows an increasing percentage of social media users compared to the previous year, indicating 7.7% (an increase of 2 million) [71]. Simon Kemp [71] also highlights the percentage of the audience that marketers can reach based on their age and gender. The highest age range of social media audiences is 25-34 years old.

**2.7 Ipoh**

Ipoh City was rated sixth globally to visit Asia's most attractive places by "Lonely Planet". The existence of hipster cafés that flourish throughout the town of Ipoh, particularly in the Old Town and New Town, should be regarded as one such measure [72]. Lonely Planet [72] describes Ipoh as the Renaissance city of Malaysia, where the coffee shops and historical residences make a long, overdue comeback. Moreover, Lonely Planet [72] also mentioned that the main highlights found in Ipoh are the growing number of cafes, reminiscing the Ipoh Coffee.

Ipoh has been groaning in a load of local drivers who trip up seeking charm and great food in the little town. Ipoh is so famous that tourists will have to wait for a while on weekends if they want to taste some of Ipoh's most outstanding food [73].

**3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Based on the literature and the highlighted issues, the concept study framework is illustrated in Figure 1: The framework portrays the relationship between social media information and customer loyalty. The framework also displays the relationship between SERVQUAL and customer loyalty. Furthermore, the relationship between satisfaction and social media information, satisfaction and SERVQUAL; as satisfaction as the mediating variable that investigates the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

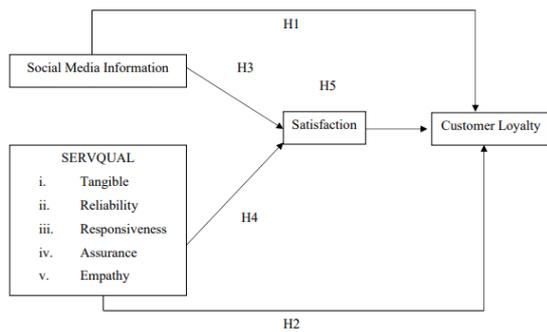


Figure 1: Research Framework

**4. CONCLUSION**

Because the study is still being investigated, it is hoped that the outcome will reflect the findings from an academic standpoint. It will reveal the understanding of is going viral is a good thing in terms of social media information and service quality towards cafes in Ipoh. Furthermore, it will lead to other potential scholars

investigating the reuse of the SERVQUAL model and social media in more depth or a more extensive scope in cafes.

From another perspective, the study enables to provide significant a substantial contribution towards cafes provider or food and beverage industry to understand better what is relevant from customers' thoughts and how service quality can be enhanced by assessing the service quality of the cafe. Moreover, this research may also help the cafe owner attract potential customers through social media with good use and maintain customer loyalty. This is because the café provider would better understand whether going viral is a good thing and how to use the viral concept in the best way.

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