

# **CONSUMER RIGHTS & CUSTOMER LOYALTY OF ONLINE FOOD DELIVERY SERVICES AMONG CONSUMERS IN SARAWAK**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Online Food Delivery Services (OFDS) is gaining popularity as one e-commerce platform. This paper aims to empirically evaluate consumers' awareness of their rights using OFDS services, determine whether their experience exercising consumer rights when using OFDS, and examine whether their experience exercising these rights affects their loyalty to their preferred OFDS. The selected consumer rights for this investigation include Rights to Basic Needs, Rights to Information, Rights to Choose, Rights to Safety and Rights to Redress. Employing a quantitative approach, this study surveyed questionnaire distribution across four main divisions in Sarawak: Kuching, Samarahan, Sibuan and Miri. The data was analysed using multiple regression analysis techniques. The results indicate that Consumer Rights to Basic Needs, Rights to Information, and Rights to Choose significantly influence loyalty. Both the Rights to Safety and Rights to Redress positively affect loyalty, but their influence is not statistically significant. Furthermore, Mann-Whitney U Test was employed to compare the means of two prominent OFDS platforms preferred by the respondents, namely GrabFood and Foodpanda. The findings suggest no significant difference between the sample means for all the variables used in this study. This study provides a fresh insight into the consumer rights and protection of OFDS from both marketing and consumerism perspectives.

**Keywords:** Consumer rights, consumer protection, Online Food Delivery Service (OFDS), food-hailing services, GrabFood, Foodpanda, Customer Loyalty

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Malaysia witnessed a surge in demand for online food delivery services (OFDS), a trend that persisted even after the COVID-19 pandemic, driven by ease of use, convenience and accessibility. In 2023 alone, the user penetration rate impressively reached 30.5% (Statista, 2023). During the pandemic, the restriction on dining out and health concerns significantly influenced the adoption of OFDS. Post-pandemic shows a promising rapid growth trajectory, with projected OFDS revenue expected to reach USD 2.31 billion in 2023 (Statista, 2023), indicating an anticipated sustained expansion in the market. OFDS has transcended the traditional boundaries, emerging as a contemporary food ordering alternative. The rise of OFDS can be attributed to urban consumers' evolving preferences and behaviours. Working adults, parents with busy schedules and students, among others, increasingly rely on OFDS due to their hectic daily lives (Chai et al., 2019; Cho et al., 2019; Gazi, 2018). The increased smartphone use in Malaysia has also contributed to the rapid growth of OFDS, both before, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic (Koay et al., 2022; Sharma et al., 2023). OFDS smartphone apps have revolutionised the food ordering processes by offering multiple vendors a plethora of food options, further fuelling the industry's expansion.

Generally, the OFDS landscape comprises two primary types of apps i.e., 3<sup>rd</sup> party Delivery Apps and Merchant's Delivery Apps (Oppotus, 2023). Major brands like KFC, McDonald, Pizza Hut and Nandos operate their own delivery services (i.e., Merchant's Delivery Apps). Whilst other restaurants and food vendors typically engage with third-party Delivery Apps (OFDS). Popular OFDS in Malaysia include FoodPanda, FoodTime, Misi, Bekal etc. Interestingly, transportation-based companies were also venturing their services into food delivery services such as AirAsiaFood and GrabFood. Furthermore, Sarawak showcases its local popular homegrown OFDS,

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featuring Lyfe and Planet Kuching in Kuching and Mimo and Big Delivery in Miri. These instances underscore the significant growth within the OFDS market in Malaysia. Despite the emergence of various business models among OFDS providers, the core services remain consistent: a unified application that allows customers to order food from multiple vendors. Although the fees charged by OFDS providers to customers or vendors might vary, these factors appear to be widely accepted, suggesting that the benefits outweighing the costs.

Fierce competition in OFDS leads to several initiatives, including loyalty programmes, to sustain and retain its customers (Liu et al., 2023; Suhartanto et al., 2019). OFDS providers even go to a greater length in offering a range of valuable functionalities, such as a chat interface facilitating communication between users and riders, as well as a food delivery tracking tool, to enable consumers to monitor the real-time location of the assigned riders (Sharma et al., 2023). Hence, the use of OFDS attracted many researchers to investigate consumer uses and adoption (Anbumathi et al., 2023; Cheng et al., 2021; Cho et al., 2019; Pigatto et al., 2017; Pillai et al., 2022; Saad, 2021; Sharma et al., 2023; Singh et al., 2023) and behaviours (Tsai et al., 2023; Yeo et al., 2017) from different perspectives including satisfaction and loyalty (Kim et al., 2021; Koay et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2023; Rombach et al., 2023; Suhartono et al., 2019; Triyuni et al., 2021).

### **1.1 Consumer Protection and Rights in Malaysia**

Consumer rights is the essence consumerism concept, that denotes collective endeavours aimed to protect consumers from unethical business practices (Alsmadi & Alnawas, 2019). Malaysia is quite active in protection its consumers. Consumer protection and rights are safeguarded through various laws, agencies and policies. Consumer Protection Act 1999 is a specific law in Malaysia to protect consumers (Consumer Protection Act 1999). The act aims to safeguard consumer interest, ensure fair trade practices and regulate consumer-business transactions. It covers various aspects e.g., advertisements, product safety, warranties and contract terms. It is imperative for a business entity to guarantee the safety and satisfaction of consumers when they utilise products they have purchased (Ryngelblum & Vianna, 2017).

Meanwhile, in the context of consumer rights, the former President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, articulated the acknowledgment of consumers' rights within the Consumer Bill of Rights, which was introduced to the US Congress on 15 March 1962 (Ahmad et al., 2023). The Bill declares four basic rights of consumers, namely: 1) the right to safety; 2) the right to be informed; 3) the right to choose; and 4) the right to be heard (Boone et al., 2020). Following this, the International Organization of Consumers Union (IOCU) has formulated additional consumer rights, encompassing right to redress, right to basic needs, the right to consumer education and the right to environmental health (Zharkenova et al., 2015). In the current scope of research, which is OFDS in Sarawak, the authors opined that there are five applicable consumer rights which are right to basic needs, right to Information, right to choose, right to safety and right to redress. The application of consumer legal protection as well as the utilisation of consumer rights are necessary to curb the sale of lack of quality products (Rizzi, 2017) and services, as a measure of check and balance between consumers and service providers (Ferretti, 2014). Many consumers remain unaware of their rights, both in traditional and online setting. Consumers might also did not realise that their actions constitute the exercise of their rights while utilising OFDS. Furthermore, it is still uncertain whether, by exercising these rights reflect their loyalty to use the OFDS. Even though there are quite a handful studies on OFDs, however, the empirical evidence that discusses consumer rights in an online environment, specifically in OFDS context are still scarce (Ibarra & Revilla, 2014). Hence, the main purpose of this study is: 1. to analyse the applicable consumer rights such as right to basic needs, right to Information, right to choose, right to safety and right to redress; 2. to investigate the consumer rights relationship with loyalty of OFDS use; and 3. to compare the means of two notable OFDS platforms preferred by the respondents.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 OFDS and Consumer Rights in Malaysia**

Electronic marketplace introduces novel and intricate challenges in the realm of safeguarding consumer rights. The significant technological advancements in the contemporary world undeniably wield a profound influence on the safety, accessibility, and quality of goods and services (Shweta, 2022). In pursuit of profits, certain unscrupulous entrepreneurs often neglect the needs of consumers, resulting in the supply of substandard products (Laasch et al., 2020) through online platforms. This is precisely when the laws governing the protection of consumer rights come into play. The evolving landscape of the market poses challenges to existing national frameworks for safeguarding consumer rights, necessitating the development of new structures to ensure effective consumer protection. Numerous researchers rightly emphasised that online consumers deserve protection that is at least on par with the safeguards afforded to offline consumers (Kirillova et al., 2016).

From the perspective of consumer protection in Malaysia, the introduction of the Consumer Protection Act 1999 obviously can be regarded as a significant achievement. The enactment of this Act is the result of the collective efforts of various parties, including consumer protection organisations such as the Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations (FOMCA).

According to the Consumer Protection Act Bill 1999, which was read in the Dewan Rakyat on July 27, 1999, there are three main objectives for the enactment of this act. These objectives include to provide statutory provisions related to consumer protection, establishing the National Consumer Advisory Council and setting up the Tribunal for Consumer Claims (Dewan Rakyat Malaysia, 1999). Based on the Consumer Protection Act 1999, its contents encompass several crucial sections related to consumer protection, such as false representation, safety of goods and services, unfair terms, warranties in the supply of goods and services, product liability, the National Consumer Advisory Council, the Tribunal for Consumer Claims and enforcement aspects. Therefore, the introduction of the Consumer Protection Act 1999 is seen as providing legal provisions that can consolidate all these essential aspects of consumer protection (Nadason et al., 2016). It is paramount to note that in the current scope of research, which is OFDS in Sarawak, the authors found out that there are five applicable consumer rights which are right to basic needs, right to Information, right to choose, right to safety and right to redress.

Various aspects of consumer rights are addressed by OFDS service providers in Malaysia. This study chooses to address five (5) consumer rights. Firstly, the *Right to Basic Need*, which basically recognised as the right to the fulfilment of fundamental necessities (Makanyeza et al., 2021). OFDS platforms providing access to fulfilling fundamental consumers' basic needs, by ensuring access to food, at affordable prices and good quality (Ibarra & Revilla, 2014; Liu et al., 2023; Prastyo et al., 2021; Suhartanto et al., 2019). The platform eventually offers a diverse range of meals, catering for various dietary needs and ensuring consumers have access to adequate and varied food choices for their nutritional requirements. Section 8 of the Consumer Protection Act 1999 eventually govern the consumers with this right against the "false," "deceptive" and "misleading," business practices that lead to consumer error.

Secondly, the *Right to Information*. In the light of consumer right to Information, manufacturers and sellers must provide clear (Donnelly et al., 2019), accurate (Abe-Matsumoto et al., 2018), and sufficient Information to facilitate consumers in making informed choices before purchasing a product (Micklitz & Saumier, 2018). This Information can be conveyed to consumers through statements (Bovay & Alston, 2018), advertisements, labels (Frohlich, 2017), or messages in various mass media (Mahgoub & Nollet, 2019). Conversely, incomplete or vague Information will make it difficult for consumers to identify the true identity, quality, and nature of a product (Hakim et al., 2020). According to sections 67(2)(c) and 67(2)(d) of the Consumer Protection Act 1999, the existence of a mark, instruction, or warning related to the method of using a product can also be expected by the consumer in determining whether any defects exist in a product or not. OFDS platforms provide comprehensive Information about the food, e.g., ingredients, preparation methods, and customer reviews. This transparency empowers consumers to make informed decisions (Ibarra & Revilla, 2014) before completing their orders, aligning with their preferences and dietary requirements. On top of that, consumers are also able to track delivery in real-time through OFDS apps (Abumathi et al., 2023; Pillai et al., 2022).

Thirdly, the *Right to Choose* emphasised the importance of consumers are given its right to choose products/ services at competitive prices, without compromising the guarantee of satisfactory quality (Ibarra & Revilla, 2014). Consumers are entrusted with the responsibility to make informed choices and decisions, demonstrating their ability to differentiate among options (Yahya & Rasit, 2019). OFDS platforms in Malaysia offer a wide array of options, allowing consumers to choose from various restaurants and cuisines. They provide extensive menus and filters that empower consumers to select based on dietary preferences, price range, and location. One could contend that Section 24R of the Consumer Protection Act 1999 duly acknowledges and upholds the consumer's right to choose.

Next, the *Right to Safety* pertaining the assurance of consumers to conform with basic safety requirements and to be protected against product and services deliverable (Ibarra & Revilla, 2014). Legal measures pertaining to safety are deemed crucial instruments in protecting consumers from unsafe products or services (Ismail et al., 2012). The legal provision lies in section 67(1) of the Malaysian Consumer Protection Act 1999, falling under the *pari materia* classification (Smith, 2016). It implies that the consumer's right to a safe product or services in meeting their life needs, ensuring that consumers are not exposed to potential harm resulting from the usage or consumption of a product or services, including food. In OFDS context, ensuring food safety during delivery is crucial. Hence OFDS in Malaysia emphasise measures to maintain food safety standards during transportation, including packaging that maintains the food's integrity and hygiene. Since the overall OFDS ecosystem also include human interaction with the food delivery personnel, hence the right to safety from this perspective should

also be taken into account. In Malaysia, the delivery personnel term coined as OFDS rider. The simple reason behind the term is that they typically rider motorcycles or bicycles to deliver the food ordered by the consumers. Finally, the *Right to Redress*, refers to a protection (Whittaker, 2019) granted to consumers to seek redress for a claim and receive compensation from the manufacturer and seller (Claeys & Terryn, 2017) due to the usage of a defective and substandard product or service. In pursuing compensation, consumers have the right to legal counsel and must adhere to certain procedures (Loos & Samoy, 2014). More than five decades, researchers highlight the importance of providing opportunity for the consumers to voice their dissatisfaction and complaints to be settled satisfactorily (Aaker and Day, 1978). Malaysia is considered as lucky as under Section 36 of the Consumer Protection Act 1999, an implied guarantee as to price is established. This right to redress comes into play when the seller partakes in a prohibited practice related to the product, specifically engaging in a misleading action (Bant & Paterson, 2017). Most OFDS have customer support systems in place, either through the apps itself, or through conventional way e.g., phone call or email. OFDS providers normally dealt with consumers grievances related to late deliveries, incorrect orders, or food quality issues. These platforms usually have refund or replacement policies to rectify errors, ensuring consumers have a means to fair settlement or redress.

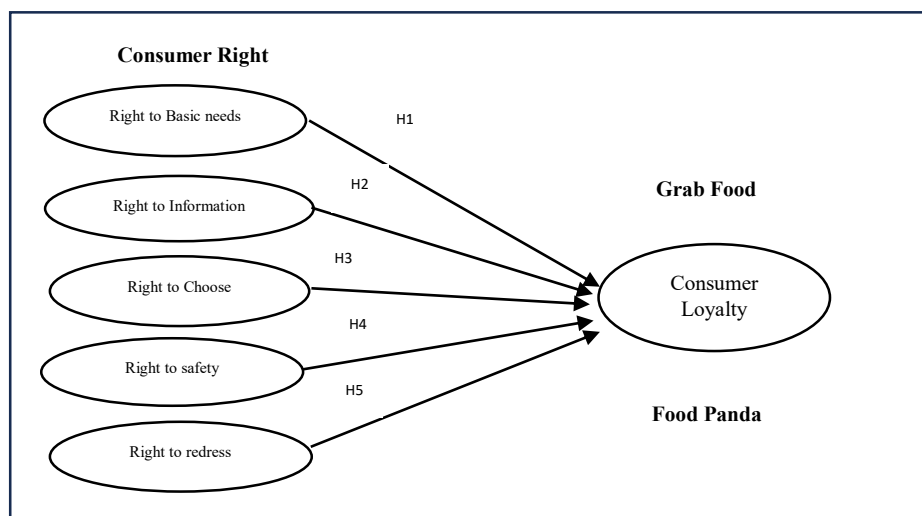
Consumer rights and protection in Malaysia represents a key juncture where legal framework, such as the Consumer Protection Act 1999, underline the significance of ensuring the safety, quality, and transparency of products and services for consumers. The evolution of consumer legislation, coupled with the acknowledgment of consumer rights and avenues for redress, reflects a commitment to adopting a marketplace where consumers can make informed choices without compromising their well-being. As Malaysia strives for economic progress, upholding robust consumer protection measures becomes not only a legal obligation but a testament to the nation's dedication to promote trust, fairness, and accountability in commercial transactions.

## 2.2 *OFDS Loyalty*

It is difficult to retain and sustain OFDS customers' due to the increase of competition intensity in the market. Hence it is crucial for OFDS provider to have satisfied and loyal customers (Rombach et al., 2023; Troise et al., 2020). According to (Oliver, 1999), loyalty denotes the unwavering consumer commitment to consistently repurchase desired products and services, irrespective of changing situational factors or marketing endeavours. In the OFDS context, loyalty is defined "as customers' commitment to using OFD services, resulting in repurchases and favorable actions toward the service provider" (Rombach et al., 2023). It also implies the consistent use of OFDS on the same platform continuously irrespective of the existence of other OFDS competitors that use similar business model and technology (Pee et al., 2018). Confidence in a service provider is the key to loyalty (Ou et al., 2013) that can be translated by revisiting the store/website or OFDS platform (Cho et al., 2018; Xin et al., 2023). Prior study by Oliver (1999) also contended that loyalty is "a deeply held commitment to repurchase or patronise a preferred product or service consistently in the future despite situational influences and marketing efforts". Referring to the loyalty definition by Rombach et al., (2023), the customer behavior to revisit is part of the loyalty characteristics, in this case when the customer intends to, or revisit / repurchase as well as their positive behaviour towards OFDS providers, can be deemed as loyal (Sidharta et al., 2021; Suhartanto et al., 2019). Kim et al., (2009) and Suhartanto et al., (2019) highlights that loyal customers tend to repeat and make more purchases compared to newly acquired customers, voluntarily refer the service to others, and indirectly lessen operating costs. Kim et al., (2009) posited that having loyal customers in an online environment can significantly boost profit margin even if the expenditure to develop online loyalty might be greater compared to the conventional loyalty programme.

## 2.3 *Research Framework*

The Consumer Protection Act 1999 includes various essential sections that pertain to consumer protection. These sections cover topics such as false representation, the safety of goods and services, unfair terms, warranties in the supply of goods and services, product liability, the National Consumer Advisory Council, the Tribunal for Consumer Claims, and enforcement aspects. Therefore, the study examines the relationship between customer right and Customer loyalty for two main OFSD (Grab food and FoodPanda). Figure 1 presents the connections between Customer Right (right to basic needs, right to Information, right to choose, right to safety, right to redress) towards Customer loyalty. In addition, the research framework presented five hypotheses, which are further upon in the subsequent subtopics. Every line in the graph depicts a clear and direct relationship between an independent variable and the dependent variable.

**Figure 1: Research Framework**

#### 2.4 Hypotheses Development

While there is growing awareness of the significance importance in safeguarding consumer protection and rights, empirical evidence specifically focused on consumer loyalty within the realm of OFDS remains limited. Therefore, references from previous studies conducted in various countries were utilised and scrutinised to compose the hypotheses development for this study.

OFDS platforms providing access to fulfilling fundamental consumers' basic needs, by ensuring access to food at affordable prices (Ghosh, 2020; Liu et al., 2023; Prasetyo et al., 2021), promotion (Ghosh, 2020; Sidharta et al., 2021), availability of the services (Sidharta et al., 2021), on time delivery (Sidharta et al., 2021; Su et al., 2022) and food quality (Eu & Sameeha, 2021; Sidharta et al., 2021). The OFDS platforms eventually offer a diverse range of meals, catering for various dietary needs and ensuring consumers have access to adequate and varied food choices for their nutritional requirements and health preferences. Not only that, but food quality also refers to the resemblance of image representation in the OFDS apps (Rombach et al., 2023; Sidharta, et al., 2021; Su et al., 2022). If most of these basic needs are fulfilled by the OFDS, there is a tendency that the consumers will be loyal to their preferred platform (Su et al., 2022; Suhartanto et al., 2019). Hence, it can be proposed that: **H1**: Consumer right to basic needs positively affects the consumer loyalty on online food delivery service.

In OFDS environments, the Information of the food, restaurants, delivery time and estimation of food to arrive are the basic features of any OFDS platform. The Information also includes the price and service charge and including the delivery personnel (rider) Information (Rombach et al., 2023). Eventually, consumers inadvertently exercise their Rights to Information. The comprehensiveness of the information availability indirectly denotes the information quality provided (Kim et al., 2021; Koay et al., 2022; Phuong & Trang, 2018; Pillai et al., 2022; Saad, 2021; Sharma et al., 2023; Triyuni et al., 2021) in the OFDS platform, hence affect the loyalty in using the OFDS. As such, it can be postulated that: **H2**: Consumer right to Information positively affects the consumer loyalty on online food delivery service.

OFDS normally provides ample choices for consumers to choose their food and beverages from many food vendors. Food choices are among the salient quality attributes used in the previous OFDS studies specifically by Cho et al., (2019), Kaur et al., (2021), Liu et al., (2023), Pillai et al., (2022) and Suhartanto et al., (2019). Hence, it can be hypothesised that: **H3**: Consumer right to choose positively affects consumer loyalty on online food delivery services.

The fundamental of OFDS eco-system, the right to safety does not focus only on food safety as other normal restaurants (Kaur et al., 2021). Liu et al., (2023) highlighted that ensuring food safety through human, functional, mechanical, and cleanliness factors significantly enhanced consumer satisfaction and positively influenced their intentions to revisit a restaurant an in this case, OFDS (Kaur et al., 2021). Security related to customer information/privacy are also part of the safety features that should be embedded by the OFDS services (Koay et al., 2022; Pigatto et al., 2017; Prasetyo et al., 2021; Rombach et al., 2023; Sharma et al., 2023; Triyuni et al.,

2021). It can be proposed that: **H4**: Consumer right to safety positively affect the consumer loyalty on online food delivery service.

In e-service quality, responsiveness can boost customer loyalty (Tsai et al., 2023). Responsiveness also reflects the Right to Redress where consumers are entitled to seek resolution of problems, remedy, compensation, and accessibility to complaint mechanism (Cheng et al., 2021). The OFDS provides a few mechanisms to address the responsiveness including through the OFDS rider, platform/apps, or customer service (Cheng et al., 2021; Tsai et al., 2023). Therefore, the following is proposed: **H5**: Consumer right to redress positively affect the consumer loyalty on online food delivery service.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This study utilises quantitative methods by collecting primary data across four main divisions in Sarawak: Kuching, Samarahan, Sibu and Miri. The sample size was established through convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling method, due to the unknown total population of OFDS users in Sarawak. Additionally, the sample size was chosen to fulfil the statistical significance criteria where  $n > 104 + m$ , where  $m$  is the number of independent variables (Wilson Vanvoorhis & Morgan, 2007). This study incorporates six variables; hence minimum sample size should be at least 110. The total number of respondents for the study are 310, exceeding the minimum requirements. Regression analysis and was conducted to test the hypotheses. Further analysis to compare the findings between the two Major OFDS Providers (i.e. Foodpanda and GrabFood) by conducting Mann-Whitney U Test.

#### 3.1 Data Collection

The cross-sectional survey to collect the data was carried out in between August to September 2023. Self-administered questionnaire survey was distributed to customers using online MSForm. The online form was deemed to be more convenient compared to paper-based questionnaire. It could "screen through" whether the respondents are the current OFDS customer or not by using branching questions. Respondents who are not currently using OFDS were not eligible to proceed to answer the rest of the questionnaire and immediately the MSForm will direct them to end the survey session. Those who were eligible to proceed with the rest of the survey questions are currently OFDS customers.

Prior to the data collection, two sequential stages of pre-test were carried out to validate the survey. The initial phase engaged e-commerce and consumer behaviour experts, who are also lecturers, to assess survey's overall constructs. Subsequently, questionnaire was distributed to 10 respondents who share the same characteristics as OFDS customers required for this study. Feedback from both stages was meticulously considered and integrated to enhance the questionnaire quality. This process also serves as the face validity for the study. A pilot test was conducted involving 30 respondents to examine the reliability of the questionnaire. The Cronbach Alpha values were greater than 0.8 for all variables, indicating good reliability.

#### 3.2 Questionnaire Development

The questionnaire used for this study consists of two sections: Section 1: Demographics, Section 2: Questions related to Customer Rights and Customer Loyalty. The questions for customer right were designed and adapted from Ibarra & Revilla (2014). All questions have been recomposed to fit the circumstances of OFDS in Malaysia and particularly in Sarawak. Questions are formulated based on the five consumer rights components, i.e., Right to Basic Needs, Right to Information, Right to Choose, Right to Safety, Right to Redress. A total number 34 questions for these variables, which served as predictor variables. The study adopted Likert type scale for all variables. Consumer Rights variables use five (5) scales ranges from: 5. Highly Agree; to 1. Highly Disagree. Whereas Customer Loyalty, serves as the dependent variable, consisting of eight questions which were adapted from Kim et al., (2021), Lee & Han (2022) and Prasetyo et al., (2021). This variable used seven (7) scales, i.e., 7. Highly Agree; and 1. Highly Disagree. A Likert type scale is commonly used to measure different latent constructs. The differences in scale numbers for the dependent and independent variables, eventually to cater the influence of psychological distance between options, particularly for the 7-point scale (Wakita et al., 2012).

Reliability testing was computed to determine the internal consistency for each variable. Cronbach Alpha for each variable is reliable for the study, where Right to Basic Needs (0.801), Right to Information (0.899), Right to Choose (0.859), Right to Safety (0.832), Right to Redress (0.872) and Customer Loyalty (0.890). Factor loadings

for all variables are greater than 0.8. According to Nunnally & Bernstein (1994), Cronbach Alpha values that fall within 0.6 - 0.8 are considered moderate and acceptable.

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

SPSS 21.0 was used as statistical tool for data analysis. Descriptive analysis was conducted to examine the demographic characteristics of the participants. Multiple regression analysis was performed to elucidate the impact of all four independent variables (i.e., Right to Basic Needs, Right to Information, Right to Choose, Right to Safety, Right to Redress) on Customer Loyalty. Finally, Mann-Whitey U test was performed to determine the equality or differences between the two sample means of OFDS platforms preferred by the respondents.

## **4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

### **4.1 General Characteristics**

Initially, a total of 377 respondents residing in Sarawak participated in the survey. However, for the purpose of this study, the findings were filtered, and only answers from OFDS users were analysed. Hence, only 310 respondents were selected for the analysis as 67 respondents are non-OFDS users. The non OFDS users were discarded from the study since they might not have opinions on the questions about OFDS applications and services.

Table 1 represents the descriptive analysis of the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Majority of the respondents are female (78.1%). Majority of the respondents where the age group falls within the range of 18-22 years old (78.7%) followed by 23-37 years old (11%). The findings also align with the other studies, where majority of the OFDS users also fall within this range (Alalwan, 2020; Lee & Han, 2022). The findings also revealed that most of the respondents are full-time students (85.5%), followed by full-time workers (11%). Five respondents (1.6%) prefer not to disclose their employment status. Based on the employment status, it is relatable that more than half of respondents (52.6%) earned less than minimum wages (i.e., less than RM1000).

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of The Respondents**

Category	Frequency	Percent%	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	68	21.9
	Female	242	78.1
<b>Age</b>	18-22	244	78.7
	23-27	34	11
	28-32	5	1.6
	33-37	8	2.6
	38-42	5	1.6
	43-47	11	3.5
	48-52	2	0.6
	53-57	1	0.3
	<b>Employment Status</b>	Full Time Student	265
Working Full Time		34	11
Working Part Time		5	1.6
Prefer Not to Disclose		5	1.6
Others		1	0.3
<b>Level of household income</b>	<RM500	102	32.9
	RM501- RM1000	61	19.7
	RM1001- RM2000	47	15.2
	RM2001- RM3000	26	8.4
	RM3001- RM4000	26	8.4
	RM4001- RM5000	15	4.8
	RM5001- RM6000	9	2.9
	RM6001- RM7000	5	1.6
	7001-8000	9	2.9
	8001-9000	3	1
	9001-10000	7	2.3
<b>OFDS platforms used</b>	Use only one OFDS	111	35.8
	Combination of two (2) or more	199	64.2
<b>Preferred OFDS</b>	GrabFood	152	49
	Foodpanda	158	51

Respondents were given options to choose more than one OFDS platform that they frequented. 111 (35.8%) respondents adopted only one OFDS platform and the remaining 199 (64.2%) utilised a combination of two (2) or more OFDS. However, for the purpose of the analysis, respondents were asked to choose only one (1) OFDS that they preferred the most, and this question served as a basis for them to answer the questionnaire. Interestingly, respondents seem to prefer GrabFood and Foodpanda as their preferred OFDS for this study. There is only a slight difference in number between the two OFDS, where Foodpanda leads by only six respondents (51%) compared to GrabFood (49%).

#### 4.2 Hypothesis Result

Table 2 shows the respondents' consumer right and customer loyalty which were measured in this study. The average mean of 34 items of consumer rights was 3.87 out of 5 (perfect score); right for basic needs (3.78), right to Information (3.89), right to choose (3.97), right to safety (3.88), right to redress (3.83) and customer loyalty (5.66) as the dependent variable has seven Likert scale. Table 3 shows the results of correlation analysis among those variables. Each factor of consumer right (Right to Basic Needs, Right to Information, Right to Choose, Right to Safety, Right to Redress) turned out to be significantly correlated with customer loyalty (\*\* $p < 0.01$ ). The correlation coefficient between "right to choose" and "right to information" was the highest ( $r = 0.739$ ) while that between "right to redress" and "customer loyalty" was the lowest (0.491).



**Table 2:** Consumer right and Customer loyalty

Category	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Corrected Item total Correlation	Cronbach's A If Item Deleted
<b>Right to choose</b>	CHOOSE1	4.15	0.716	0.711	0.831
	CHOOSE2	4.05	0.736	0.651	0.837
	CHOOSE3	4.16	0.743	0.68	0.834
	CHOOSE4	4.18	0.696	0.713	0.832
	CHOOSE5	3.17	1.164	0.344	0.89
	CHOOSE6	3.8	0.878	0.596	0.843
	CHOOSE7	4.17	0.756	0.67	0.835
	CHOOSE8	4.08	0.753	0.698	0.832
<b>Right to basic needs</b>	BSN1	4.24	0.677	0.44	0.792
	BSN2	3.9	0.872	0.453	0.789
	BSN3	3.48	0.958	0.282	0.82
	BSN4	3.65	1.04	0.679	0.746
	BSN5	3.62	1.072	0.697	0.741
	BSN6	3.63	1.043	0.622	0.758
	BSN7	3.88	0.856	0.586	0.767
<b>Right to Information</b>	INFO1	4.08	0.753	0.659	0.889
	INFO2	3.8	0.948	0.698	0.885
	INFO3	3.94	0.81	0.718	0.883
	INFO4	3.64	0.916	0.698	0.885
	INFO5	3.91	0.818	0.685	0.886
	INFO6	3.73	0.873	0.728	0.882
	INFO7	3.92	0.874	0.618	0.892
	INFO8	4.06	0.814	0.674	0.887
<b>Right to safety</b>	SAFETY1	4.14	0.742	0.587	0.808
	SAFETY2	3.35	1.05	0.347	0.858
	SAFETY3	3.71	0.906	0.609	0.804
	SAFETY4	3.68	0.884	0.556	0.813
	SAFETY5	4.03	0.765	0.668	0.796
	SAFETY6	4.09	0.725	0.7	0.793
	SAFETY7	4.16	0.715	0.732	0.789
<b>Right to redress</b>	REDRESS1	3.89	0.803	0.733	0.833
	REDRESS2	3.89	0.745	0.753	0.828
	REDRESS3	3.7	0.904	0.689	0.856
	REDRESS4	3.84	0.79	0.744	0.829
<b>Customer loyalty</b>	CL1	5.23	1.354	0.393	0.906
	CL2	5.73	1.19	0.708	0.872
	CL3	5.84	1.091	0.786	0.866
	CL4	5.85	1.107	0.799	0.864
	CL5	5.81	1.084	0.756	0.869
	CL6	5.87	1.004	0.78	0.868
	CL7	5.36	1.316	0.6	0.884
	CL8	5.2	1.358	0.627	0.881

**Table 3:** Correlation analysis

	<b>Right To Redress</b>	<b>Customer loyalty</b>	<b>Right To Basic Needs</b>	<b>Right To Information</b>	<b>Right To Choose</b>	<b>Right To Safety</b>
Right To Redress	1					
Customer Loyalty	.491**	1				
Right To Basic Needs	.603**	.515**	1			
Right To Information	.572**	.571**	.585**	1		
Right To Choose	.635**	.652**	.628**	.739**	1	
Right To Safety	.681**	.567**	.613**	.692**	.738**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

A multiple regression analysis was carried out to examine the impact of consumer right and customer loyalty. Table 4 depicts the list of hypotheses for this study

**Table 4:** List of Hypotheses

<b>No</b>	<b>Hypothesis</b>
H1	Consumer right to basic needs positively affect the consumer loyalty on online food delivery service
H2	Consumer right to Information positively affect the consumer loyalty on online food delivery service
H3	Consumer right to choose positively affect the consumer loyalty on online food delivery service
H4	Consumer right to safety positively affect the consumer loyalty on online food delivery service
H5	Consumer right to redress positively affect the consumer loyalty on online food delivery service

Multiple regression was chosen as the analysis to test all the five hypotheses. Customer Loyalty, as the dependent variable, was regressed to Consumer Right variables (Right to Basic Needs, Right to Information, Right to Choose, Right to Safety, Right to Redress). The summary of the findings in Table 5 reveals that the R<sup>2</sup>= 0.46, depicts that the model explains 46% of the variance in Customer Loyalty. Right to Choose positively and significantly predicts Customer Loyalty, F (5, 304) = 51.733, p < 0.001. It also indicates that the Right to Choose plays significant role in shaping Customer Loyalty (β=0.61, p<0.001). The other two variables, Right to Basic Needs and Right to Information also show positive and significant effect on Customer Loyalty where (β=0.16, p=0.05) and (β=0.18, p=0.05) respectively. The remaining two variables, i.e., Right to Safety and Right to Redress both positively affect Customer Loyalty, hence supporting the hypotheses.

**Table 5:** Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Regression weight</b>	<b>Beta Coefficient</b>	<b>R2</b>	<b>F value</b>	<b>T value</b>	<b>P value</b>	<b>Hypothesis Statement</b>
1	<b>Right To Basic Needs -&gt; Customer Loyalty</b>	<b>0.16</b>	<b>0.46</b>	<b>51.733</b>	<b>1.924</b>	<b>0.05**</b>	<b>Supported</b>
2	<b>Right To Information -&gt; Customer Loyalty</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>0.46</b>	<b>51.733</b>	<b>1.931</b>	<b>0.05**</b>	<b>Supported</b>
3	<b>Right To Choose -&gt; Customer Loyalty</b>	<b>0.61</b>	<b>0.46</b>	<b>51.733</b>	<b>5.402</b>	<b>P &lt;0.00*</b>	<b>Supported</b>
4	Right To Safety -> Customer Loyalty	0.14	0.46	51.733	1.281	0.20 <sup>ns</sup>	<b>Supported</b>
5	Right To Redress -> Customer Loyalty	0.05	0.46	51.733	0.554	0.58 <sup>ns</sup>	<b>Supported</b>

\*p<0.001, \*\*p=0.05, ns=not significant

#### 4.3 Comparing The Findings Between Two Major OFDS Providers

This study also interested to evaluate the differences between GrabFood and Foodpanda, the two main OFDS platforms nominated by the respondents. For this purpose, Mann-Whitney U test was utilised to see the differences for each Consumer Rights variables tested for this study, i.e., Right to Basic Needs, Right to Information, Right to Choose, Right to Safety, Right to Redress as well as Customer Loyalty.

**Table 6:** Mann-Whitney U Test

	<b>Right to Basic Needs</b>	<b>Rights to Information</b>	<b>Rights to Choose</b>	<b>Rights to Safety</b>	<b>Rights To Redress</b>	<b>Customer Loyalty</b>
Mann-Whitney U	11570.00	11630.00	11594.00	11969.00	11239.00	11412.50
Z	-.559	-.482	-.529	-.050	-.990	-.757
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.576 <sup>ns</sup>	.630 <sup>ns</sup>	.597 <sup>ns</sup>	.960 <sup>ns</sup>	.322 <sup>ns</sup>	.449 <sup>ns</sup>
n	310	310	310	310	310	310
$\sqrt{n}$	17.61	17.61	17.61	17.61	17.61	17.61
Cohen's <i>d</i>	0.032	0.027	0.030	0.003	0.056	0.037
Effect	Very small	Very small	Very small	Very small	Very small	Very small
GrabFood (n=152)						
Median	3.83	3.88	4.00	3.86	3.75	5.75
Food Panda (n=158)						
Median	3.83	4.00	4.00	3.86	3.75	5.75

ns=not significant

Based on the test findings presented in Table 6, it is uncovered that there is NO significant differences for all variables between the two OFDS, GrabFood and Foodpanda. The Cohen's *d* effect size for all variables for each variable are also very small for all variables which is less than 0.1. According to Cohen (1988) criteria as small size effect ( $d=0.2$ ), medium size effect ( $d=0.5$ ) and large size effect ( $d=0.8$ )

## 5. DISCUSSION

Despite the surge demand of OFDS use, consumer rights and its implication for customer loyalty towards OFD service have been overlooked. This study can be considered as among the first to scrutinise the effects of consumer rights on customer loyalty in the context of OFDS in Malaysia. The present study elucidates a few key important point.

First, this study highlights the significant of exercising consumer rights in the online environment. Respondents were not explicitly asked for their awareness of the five consumer rights element examined in this study, but their agreement or disagreement with the questions asked, indirectly indicate they already exercise their consumer rights. The study findings also indicate that OFDS providers and platforms in Malaysia already adhered to the fundamental consumer rights. Unfortunately, there is limited past studies that can literally support these findings. However, Chawla & Kumar (2022) in their study for general e-commerce environment, posited that, Consumer Protection Act, 2019 and Consumer Protection (E-commerce) Rules, 2020 that are newly regulated by the government were strong enough to protect and safeguard online consumers' right to boost India's e-commerce growth. The factors related to the consumers' rights (e.g. safety -security, privacy, website information etc.) influence Indian customer's trust (Chawla & Kumar, 2022). They also postulated that the growth of e-commerce in India looks promising with the existence of the legal framework and consumer protection measures. In Malaysia, the long Consumer Protection Act 1999 should safeguard consumer's rights even better. Additionally, Electronic Commerce Act 2006 extends the protection and safeguarded online consumers by providing legal recognition in facilitating commercial transactions conducted through electronic mediums.

Second, the findings have supported and have a significant relationship for Hypothesis 1, 2 and 3, which highlighted the consumer's right to basic needs, right to Information and right to choose influence the customers loyalty in using OFDS. it is certain that consumers who are using OFDS platform are looking to serve their right to basic needs, i.e. food. However, in this OFDS context consumers should have their rights to access to quality and healthy food (Cheng et al., 2021; Rombach et al., 2023; Suhartono et al., 2019; Triyuni et al., 2021). Most OFDS provides comprehensive Information about the food selection and reviews, vendor reviews and rating as well as riders rating, promotional activities, real-time riders' location and others are the evidence of fulfillment of consumers right to Information that leads to the significant of their loyalty. This finding supported by the previous studies (Kim et al., 2021; Koay et al., 2022; Phuong & Trang, 2018; Pillai et al., 2022; Prasetyo, et al., 2021; Saad, 2021; Sharma et al., 2023; Triyuni et al., 2021). The extensive list of food choices, listing of food price and food vendors, opting for food on discounted offer (Cho et al., 2019; Kaur et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2023; Pillai et al., 2022; Suhartanto et al., 2019) also serve as the confirmation of consumer right to choose that also significantly influence their loyalty.

OFDS platform available in Malaysia provide the complaint features, review and ratings in their apps, email as well as through riders. These features can be considered as the readiness for the OFDS providers to be responsive of their customers' feedback and complains. Exercising this right generally affect their loyalty towards OFDS providers (Cheng et al., 2021; Tsai et al., 2023) but the effect is not significant.

Thirdly, seniority does not matter. FoodPanda is among the pioneer of the OFDS where they started their food haling services in Malaysia in 2012. GrabFood started to operate in Malaysia in May 2018. Mann-Whitney U test reveals that there is no significant different in between the two major OFDS provider in Malaysia. The findings suggested that, based on the customer perception, seniority in the market has no significant difference of consumer rights and loyalty. Furthermore, most of the respondents are students, the study also suggested that, in general, they deal really well with the e-commerce apps like OFDS and able to exercise their consumers right that are available through the OFDS platforms.

### **5.1 Implications of the study**

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Goal 16 aims to advance peaceful and inclusive societies, provide universal access to justice, and establish effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels. By providing a fresh insight of the consumer rights and customer loyalty of OFDS from both legal and marketing perspectives, it will aid policymakers in comprehending the challenges faced by consumers in their interactions with online platforms, thereby facilitating the constant review of the existing legislative framework on consumer protection. Ultimately, the research serves as a foundational resource for policymakers, offering a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between consumer rights and loyalty in the online food delivery domain. Through these research findings, the policy makers could proactively review and revise the current regulatory frameworks that strike a delicate balance between safeguarding consumer interests and fostering a vibrant and trustworthy digital economy.

### **5.2 Limitations and Future Research**

This study contributes substantially to the existing knowledge on the factors influencing consumer rights and customer loyalty towards online food delivery services (OFSD). It is also essential to acknowledge certain limitations associated with this study. First, the data collection process was explicitly conducted in Sarawak, Malaysia, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. The resolution of this matter can be achieved through the replication of the investigation across other geographical areas. Secondly, identifying other factors of loyalty antecedents is just as crucial as using the loyalty determinants employed in this study. To establish a comprehensive model from a consumer right perspective, a future study should add other variables such as image, satisfaction trust, and involvement. Third, the OFD customer loyalty model was tested in this study through multiple regression, and did not consider any moderator effect such as gender, age, employment status, income, number of households etc., or mediator variable e.g., satisfaction, trust, etc. Thus, future studies will consider broadening the analysis to the structural equation model by considering moderator and mediator effects.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

OFDS platforms and its eco-system generally address all the five selected Consumer Rights, i.e. Right to Basic Needs, Right to Information, Right to Choose, Right to Safety, Right to Redress. Nonetheless, challenges might still arise involving the active players in OFDS eco-system. For instance, issues related to order accuracy, delivery times, misdirection, or miscommunications might occasionally violate some of the rights. It is believed that OFDS provider should embark on continuous efforts to refine their services and address consumer concerns remain vital for OFDS to uphold and strengthen consumer rights in Malaysia.

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