

# CUSTOMERS' SATISFACTION ON PRODUCT QUALITY, SERVICE QUALITY AND LOCATION OF 'RUMAH SELANGORKU'

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## ABSTRACT

The gradual rise of urban estates compared to other geographical domains is becoming a huge trial for the Malaysian government especially for expertise to provide housing establishments. Moreover, the increment in living cost and pressure upon the existing economic situation have inexorably caused high demands for cost-effective housing. Therefore, citizens depriving of affordability and accessibility to own a house is a crucial issue in Malaysia including Selangor. Inclusive of low-income demographics, urban dwellers as well as individuals of middle class are facing this issue as they do not have the eligibility to sign an application for cost-effective housing established by the governments and nevertheless, they do not have the affordability to purchase a home. In 2013, Rumah Selangorku was proposed by the Selangor Government through the Selangor Housing and Property Board for residents in Selangor. Thus, this paper intends to examine customers' satisfaction of product quality, service quality and location of their purchases of Rumah Selangorku. Systematic sampling method was utilized to obtain the answers in par with the research's objectives. Cumulatively, the results of the study presented that location was a prominent and an underlying factor to a customer before purchasing a house. Home developers were generally advised to have awareness regarding the quality of home products. Consequently, product quality was categorized with the lowest mean; specifically, home maintenance facility. Moreover, this research brings expectations in formulating the residents' gratification upon Rumah Selangorku; thus, the significance of the results has the provision of assisting the government in enriching the quality home construction.

**KEYWORDS:** Customer satisfaction, Product Quality, Service Quality, Location and Rumah Selangorku

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Possession of property is a societal objective to establish stability and wealth including enhancing quality of life. The housing industry is required to adapt and respond to various demands of all classes as Malaysia attains its status of developed-nation and high-income-nation by 2020. The increment in demand and price of properties have changed the function of housing; this affects the correlation between purchasing a property and affordability level. Public housing programs were implemented by the government to cater affordable residences to all classes especially of low-income citizens. This research emphasizes on Rumah Selangorku; the program was established to advocate, "*Satu Keluarga, Satu Kediaman yang Sempurna*". This is to ensure every citizen or family is able to own a proper household that is safe and comfortable for living. In state, affordable houses are introduced through two main agencies: Selangor

Housing and Property Board (LPHS) and State Economic Development Corporation (SEDC). Various houses were delivered by LPHS until 2010; affordable housing in Selangor was introduced as Rumah Selangorku. In 2014, LPHS also introduced Dasar Rumah Selangorku with policies as guidance for private developers partaking in building RUmah Selangorku (*Lembaga Perumahan dan Hartanah Selangor*, 2015). The price range of a single unit of Rumah Selangorku relies on the category, area, geography and other provided features; the approximate price range of a unit is RM 42,000 – RM 250,000 (Economic Planning Unit, 2015; LPHS, 2015). Rumah Selangorku is a cost-effective public housing under the enterprise of state government that is located in Selangor. The property features its own body of management aligning with Strata Management Act 2013 for implication of proper maintenance and provision of comfortability in living with complete facilities and amenities.

However, due to inadequacy of lands in urban and suburban areas, the type of residence that is apt to the program is high-rise building in comparison to landed estates. This provides numerous units of residences avoiding space consumption within an area [1]. High-rise properties are defined as an estate comprising of multiple units constructed within singular lot of land. Basic amenities are interconnected in this type of estate such as garbage loading, security system, elevators and recreational facilities [2]. Building maintenance is a necessity in maintaining a high-rise building as emphasized by the government. The value of a building proportionally digresses to the quality of maintenance implemented by the system. Preservation of a building's condition requires excellent maintenance rather than procuring high costs of resources into renovation and modification of an existing building [3]. Thus, this research aims to evaluate customers' satisfaction of product quality, service quality and location of their purchases of Rumah Selangorku.

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

In most countries, poor maintenance is commonly affiliated with government's operation of public housing and the administration causes living dissatisfactory in residents of the housing units. This will result in general depletion of living qualities in public properties and the increment in units that are vacant without attentive maintenance [4] [5]. Infrastructure in Malaysia does not comply to the standard structure or surpassing expectations of consumers due to poor maintenance of buildings and facilities. Federal government is constantly in predicament by facing public

repercussion because of management body providing inefficient maintenance in public properties. Maintenance operations are commonly perceived to yield excessive resources spent upon higher maintenance costs [6]. In this modern age, residents are astute in analyzing the performance of building management and accordingly, management body requires improvement of necessary management skills [7].

Meanwhile, based on previous researches, there is a discovery of access to mortgage and finance is one of the calamities agonized by consumers; lower and middle-incomes classes evidently face financial predicament [8]. Moreover, working class citizens with inconsistent income are heavily affected as well (REHDA, 2014) and it does not only deter loan commitments but individuals also struggle in producing savings and payments for deposits (ISIS, 2013). Contrary to previous concerns revolving around only basic caretaking and cleanliness of properties, expectations of whole maintenance of residence are current owners' primary province comprising of other areas from basic cleaning service to comprehensive maintenance [5]. Retaining product quality, service and facilities quality inclusive of proper management with success requires effective building maintenance. According to primary discussion of issues, this research focuses on evaluating the customer satisfaction of product quality, service quality and location of Rumah Selangorku residents. Therefore, this promotes further potential researches on the topic.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section elaborates a synthesis and analysis of previous published researches in relation to the main theoretical concepts of this research revolving around customer satisfaction, product quality, service quality and location.

### ***2.1 Customer Satisfaction***

Customer satisfaction perpetuates positive insights to companies and thus, it contributes to business's prosperity. Therefore, catering to the needs and desires of customers should be considered a company or an organization's main direction to attain customer satisfaction. The objective component in practical and theoretical modern marketing is customer satisfaction and it is a prominent indicator for service and housing industry. Thus, managing customer satisfaction is necessity for firms. Two approaches were suggested to evaluate consumers' satisfaction in analyzing satisfaction in the housing industry [9]. The first approach is prediction of customers' behavior

when moving into or requesting renovations to purchased property [10]; [9]. Consideration of property quality factors affecting level of satisfaction is the second approach [9]. [11] discerned that customer satisfaction is a significant factor in housing industry for propelling growth, economic success and enhancing customer relationships. Therefore, developers are required to periodically evaluate customer satisfaction to be attentive of satisfaction level among customers [12].

## ***2.2 Product Quality***

Product quality is the significant paradigm in marketing; thus, perception of own organization or company and customers on product quality are to be accounted by firms [13]. Determination of customer satisfaction depends on quality instead of value or price of property [14]. Product quality also plays an important factor to customer satisfaction [15]; [16]; [17]; [14]. This research emphasizes on consumers considering houses as a well-structured physical product with special features endowed by the developer. Progression inclusive of the foundation, structure, electrical, mechanical and roofing system of the house is constituted in the designs. Consumers receive the details of project blueprints after the construction is completed.

### ***2.2.1 Product Quality and Satisfaction***

In general, most researches on service marketing emphasizes on the construction and dimension of service quality related to satisfaction and loyalty of consumers. Above that, tangible and intangible products are provided by these industries. The results of progressing researches, consumers' choice of purchasing is majorly affected by the ascertained quality construct of consumers' durable goods and quality of products [18]. Based on these statements, there is a concurrence of product quality and service quality equally affects customers' satisfaction [19].

Criticism of cost-effective properties exists due to poor quality and defective results [20]; [21]. A report based on issues of affordable properties presented that there is deterioration in public housing projects due to improper construction, poorly designed blueprints and inadequate maintenance. Clients of building projects with insufficient funds often digress the discomfort of their accommodation and its design that do not surpass their expectations and requirements [21]. According to numerous discourses, product quality is considered to be an independent factor and thus, this research aims to study its impact on customer satisfaction [22]. Key factors corroborating to customer

satisfaction in the housing market are product quality and service quality; however, there is an inconsistency in residential environments and neighborhoods which affects customers' satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is tremendously difficult to predict as it does not solely depend on product and service quality. Therefore, the expectation is:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between product quality and customers' satisfaction of Rumah Selangorku

### ***2.3 Service Quality***

Most companies in Malaysia consider service quality to be of primary consideration. Acquisition of insights on market demands and appraisal of customers' satisfaction. In the past decades, practitioners, managers and researchers consider service quality has been proven to be the prominent area of focus that majorly contributes to business performance, lower costs, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and profitability [23].

#### ***2.3.1 Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction***

There is a close relation between customer satisfaction and service quality but they are conceptually distinguished. The relationship between these two factors is empirically evident with proper recognition [24]; [25]. Several researchers conducted empirical studies that proved service quality of efficacy contributes to customers' satisfaction [17].

Property development project triumphs with dependence on the property and service quality. Marketers are required to consider the qualities of their products and services to maintain its technological competition in the market in the eyes of customers [26]. Dissatisfaction issues rise among customers due to abandonment of property, product quality and service quality [27]. Thus, the focus in this research is the evaluation of customer satisfaction; it provides the relationship between determinants and customer satisfaction inclusive of product quality and service quality, building safety and responsibilities of developer. The acknowledgement of service quality as a significant determinant has proven evident in the success of service providers in this age's competitive environment involving housing industry [28]; [29]. Based on the discussion, hypothesis may be inferred:

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant relationship between service quality and customers' satisfaction of Rumah Selangorku.

## 2.4 Location

In any property development project, the priority is location of the property. Location of property despite of its strategical location will affect the whole sales of the property. Acquiring the perception of housing location decisions requires appreciation of context theory on household. First and foremost, customers receive a whole package of products: features of property, access to work and shopping, social networking and community characteristics, local services and various amenities when they purchase properties [30]; [31]; [32]. Location is vital in regulating decisions among customers that corroborate to the development and growth of new townships in provision of improved quality of life based on the desires of citizens and propositions in the Ninth Malaysian Plan.

### 2.4.1 Location and Customer Satisfaction

Maintaining competition in the marketplace requires establishing strategic direction. Developers require guidance in attaining their objectives regardless of time condition. Consumers always consider proximity to work place, traffic condition, healthcare facilities, transportation availability, and quality of residence; image and security regardless of development status of area. Consumers' satisfaction upon amenities of physical products and services provided by service providers are vital factors in considering purchases of properties [33]. According to numerous studies, location is considered to be an independent factor on customer satisfaction[34]. Discrepancy in supply and high demands in the aspects of location and public transportation are apparent [7].

Thus, the expectation is that:

H3: There is a significance in the relationship between product quality and customers' satisfaction of Rumah Selangorku

Figure 1 illustrated the proposed research framework.

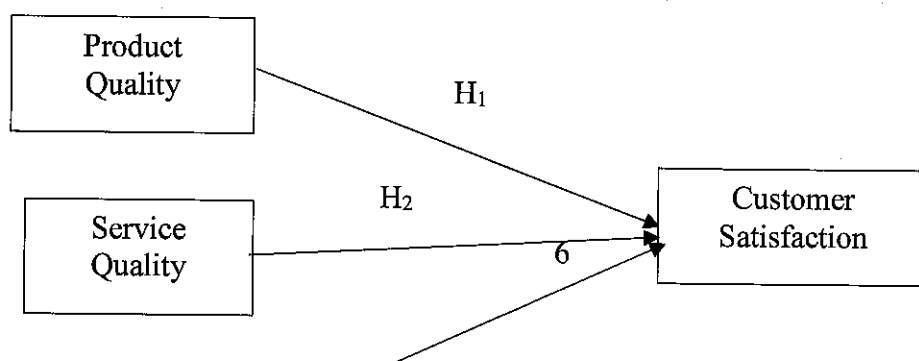


Figure 1: The Proposed Research Model

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This study utilized the quantitative method. The survey yielded 250 responses and after data screening, 200 usable and completed responses were used in the analysis with a valid response rate of 80 percent. This sample size is reasonable as [35] stated that a sample size of 30–500 is considered satisfactory. Data collection was conducted for a one-month period (from 1 March 2018 till 31 March 2018) utilizing systematic sampling technique. Responses were randomly drawn from the residents from three (3) zones. In order to measure the effect of product quality, service quality and location on buyer's satisfaction in Rumah Selangorku, two criteria have been recognized in selecting the residential areas; (1) the residential areas are built according to Rumah Selangorku; (2) Rumah Selangorku for the residential areas have been occupied within a year. Since Rumah Selangorku is still new, most of the projects still under planning and construction, this study focus on Zone 1 area which located in Klang, Daerah Petaling and Cyberjaya.

They were required to complete the survey, designed in the form of structured close-ended questions, which comprises of four sections. Section A was related on the general questions). Section B was related to consumer satisfaction of Rumah Selangorku. Section C asked the respondent their perception on product quality, service quality and location. Finally, section D gathered demographics of the respondents. In this study, Section C and D were measured on a seven-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree). The items were obtained and modified from prior research studies [12]; [27]. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program latest version was used to perform data analysis. Correlation analysis was performed to investigate relationship between product quality, service quality, location and customer satisfaction of Rumah Selangorku.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 presents the descriptive investigation on demographic profile of respondents.

**Table 2 Demographic Profiles of House buyers**

Demographic Profiles	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Age</b>		
<20	7	3.5
21 -30	29	14.5
31 - 40	149	74.5
41 - 50	10	5
>50	5	2.5
<b>Resident Status</b>		
House owner	136	68
Tenant	64	32
<b>Occupancy Period</b>		
<1 year	11	5.5
1 year	30	15
2 years	71	35.5
>3 years	88	44.4

The demographic information shows that the group from the age of 31 until 40 years old was the biggest number among all respondents with 74.5%, followed by the group of 21 until 30 years old with 14.5%. The senior citizens, with 2.5%, were the least number of respondents that completed the questionnaire. Among all 200 respondents, 68% of them were the house owner while the remaining 32% were tenants.

The respondents that reside at Rumah Selangorku for more than three years were the majority with 44.4% and this group was the longest group to stay there since it was ready for occupancy in year 2014. The respondents that live at mentioned residential area for less than one year were the smallest group. Meanwhile for house level in the premise, the result is appeared that respondents were mostly in the age categories 21-30 years old, known as Generation Y. These young people tend to have been more concerned about owning a house.

##### **4.1 Reliability Analysis**

Reliability analysis is measured via Cronbach's coefficient alpha to check for internal consistency of the constructs. All constructs had no problems in reliabilities if the Cronbach's Alpha values exceeded the criterion of 0.700 [36]. Table 2 illustrates that the lowest value of Cronbach's Alpha was 0.737 for location factor. Thus, the survey instrument is reliable to measure all constructs consistently and free from random error.



**Table 2: Reliability Coefficient Values (Cronbach Alpha)**

Dimensions	No. of Items	Reliability (N=30)
Product Quality	5	0.824
Service Quality	5	0.784
Location	10	0.737
Customer Satisfaction	3	0.886

#### 4.2 Correlation Analysis

The inter-relationships between the four variables were examined using Pearson correlation analysis. The average score of the multi-items for a construct was computed and the score was used in correlation analysis. Lind et al. (2010) stated that the correlations is strong when the value is  $r = 0.50$  to  $1.0$  or  $r = -0.50$  to  $-1.0$ .

**Table 3: Correlation Analysis Result**

Variables		Customer Satisfaction	Product Quality	Service Quality	Location
Customer Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	0.252**	0.314**	0.264**
	Sig. ( 2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	200	200	200	200
Product Quality	Pearson Correlation	0.252**	1	0.686**	0.571
	Sig. ( 2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	200	200	200	200
Service Quality	Pearson Correlation	0.314**	0.686**	1	0.906**
	Sig. ( 2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	200	200	200	200
Location	Pearson Correlation	0.264**	0.571**	0.9	1
	Sig. ( 2-tailed)	1	0.000	0.000	
	N	200	200	200	200

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Results in Table 3 revealed that all variables were correlated together at the 0.01 level using the correlation test and the values ranges  $r = 0.252$  to  $r = 0.314$ . Hence, there is no multicollinearity problem in this research. The correlation analysis result shows the strength of the relationship between variables. The relationship between product quality, service quality and location of customer satisfaction variable was analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient.

Based on the result, there were a moderate relationship between location and customer satisfaction ( $r = 0.252$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), service quality and customer satisfaction ( $r = 0.314$ ,  $p < 0.05$  and between product quality and customer satisfaction ( $r = 0.264$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).  $H_1$ ,  $H_2$   $H_3$  state that there is a positive relationship between buyers' product quality (PQ); service quality (SQ), location and satisfaction (SAT).  $H_1$ ,  $H_2$   $H_3$  was not

rejected. The findings revealed that there are positive relationship between product quality, service quality, location and customer satisfaction and support such a relationship. It is further evidence that results from empirical testing on the perceived product quality [22], service quality [28]; [29] and location show a positive relationship with satisfaction in Rumah Selangorku [34].

## **5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study has investigated the relationship between product quality, service quality and location on customer satisfaction. The results show that customer satisfaction has brought a big influence to the success of an organization. Importantly, this would potentially allow service providers to understand the factors that would increase customer satisfaction especially in the market place. Thus, this particular study would provide a better perspective in defining and exploring future potential research. Hopefully, this study can help the buyer to achieve their need to buy the house especially for those who have low income. Furthermore, the study will provide a guideline to service providers to improve their efforts to balance between demand and supply by determining the relationship between product quality, service quality, location on customer satisfaction.

Customers expect service companies to treat them well and become resentful and mistrustful when they perceive otherwise. Fairness underlies all the customers' expectations. Customers expect service companies to keep their promises (reliability), to offer honest communication materials and clean, comfortable facilities (tangibles), to provide prompt service (responsiveness), to be competent and courteous (assurance), and to provide caring, individualized attention (empathy). Fairness is not a separate dimension of service but, rather, touches the very essence of what customers expect.

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