The Impact and Relationship between Perceived Service and Product

Quality to Brand Leadership for Fast-Food Restaurants in the QSR

Industry

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Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree of Master of Business Administration

Universiti Tun Abdul Razak

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the case study is based on my original work except for quotations and citations that have been duly acknowledged. I also declare it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (UNIRAZAK) or other institution.

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Date   :   26 October 2023

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ABSTRACT

Abstract of the project paper submitted to the Senate of Universiti Tun Abdul Razak in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Business Administration

The Impact and Relationship between Perceived Service and Product Quality to Brand Leadership for Fast-Food Restaurants in the QSR Industry

By

Jeremy Kabinchong

October 2023

The purpose of this study was to consider the impact of product quality and service quality on brand leadership. To achieve this, a hypothetical deductive study was employed to investigate the correlation between these variables. A quantitative approach was adopted, and data was collected through questionnaires completed by one hundred and seven consumers from the fast-food industry, selected using a sampling design. The research methodology employed in this study was carefully designed to ensure the validity and reliability of the results. Data collection was carried out through the use of the Statistic Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), which was used to further validate the measurement model and test hypotheses. The results of the study revealed a significant positive relationship between both product quality and service quality with brand leadership. This finding has important implications for businesses, as it highlights the critical role that product quality and service quality play in establishing brand leadership. In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the impact of product quality and service quality on brand leadership. By shedding light on the connection between these variables, businesses can use this information to develop strategies that will help them establish and maintain a strong brand leadership position in their respective markets.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

The confidence level and trust due to social influence, facilitating conditions and hedonic motivation have played significant roles in customers' positive perception of quick service restaurants (QSR). Further, the efficiency and convenience of kiosk-like services has served to further embed that perception in customers. This is especially so in Malaysia and Asia (Agnihotri, Kulshreshtha, Tripathi, and Chaturvedi, 2022; Baba, Hanafiah, Mohd Shahril, and Zulkifly, 2023; Ghosh, Jhamb, and Dhiman, 2023).

In fact, there is a great interest to study the fast food industry, and this is most apparent amongst professionals in the food industry and also academics (Helal, 2022; Recuero-Virto & Valilla-Arróspide, 2022; Akgunduz, Nisari, and Sungur, 2023). Essentially it is a food source that is convenient, quick and easily obtained for citizens living in a fast-paced world. Wani (pg. 1, 2020) defines fast food as ' Fast food is defined as a type of food which could be processed, canned, frozen, and prepared in a short time and served quickly.'

The Ministry of Health defines fast food as foods manufactured in huge quantities using standardised techniques and served quickly in restaurants (Ministry of Health, 2007), while the World Health Organization defines them as foods that can be made quickly and and are marketed as a quick meal or to be taken out in restaurants and snack bars (De Vogli, Kouvonen, and Gimeno, 2014). As a result, we seen fast food growing rapidly when compared against all food categories. This is especially so in Asia (ACNielsen, 2005). It would appear that at least 36% of Asians eat at such places weekly, and over 40% spend over twice weekly in those places.

In Asia as well as Malaysia, we find that large franchises dominate the fast food industry. Amongst the big brands noted are Kentucky Fried Chicken, Burger King and McDonald's. These brands have entrenched themselves not only in the food industry

but also in the minds of Asians, especially the younger generation. This is done via 'brand evangelism' as revealed by Khashan, Elsotouhy, Ashraf Aziz, Alasker, and Ghonim (2023) in their recent study entitled, "Mediating customer engagement in the relationship between fast-food restaurants' innovativeness and brand evangelism during COVID-19: evidence from emergent markets".

Numerous studies support the reasoning that busy and hectic life choices and family commitments have a major impact on customers choosing fast food (Atkins & Bowler (2001). Recent studies have further shown that it has contributed to a long-term orientation in the loyalty-building process due to customer satisfaction and delight with fast food QSR services (Rodríguez-López, Alcántara-Pilar, and Del Barrio-García, 2023). Thus for the majority, fast food within the QSR industry is their preferred choice, and it appears that that decision is here to stay, given that busy lifestyles are here to stay.

In terms of franchisee operations, a quick overview in Malaysia shows that

Table 1 QSR Food Franchises in Malaysia, 2022

Franchise	Location	Type	Outlets
Marry Brown	Malaysia	Fast food	60
A&W	Malaysia	Fast food	52
KFC	Malaysia	Fast food	723
Burger King	Malaysia	Fast food	122
McDonald's	Malaysia	Fast food	331
Texas Chicken	Malaysia	Fast food	52
Subway	Malaysia	Fast food	82

Source: QSR Food franchises in Malaysia, 2022

It is clear from the above that the fast food restaurants within the QSR industry are faced with hyper-competition. This is especially so when we consider that many homegrown franchises are available and competing for the same or similar market and demographic segments. In the fast food restaurants within the QSR industry, the quality of their products and the quality of their services do play a crucial role in ensuring their brand leadership success (Najjinda, Sendawula, Otengei, Walugembe, and Kimuli, 2023).

1.2 Research Problem

The research problem in this research study is to assess and evaluate the impact and relationship between product and service qualities upon brand leadership in fast food restaurants within the QSR industry. The reason for this is, as discussed by Jahanshahi (2011) and Najjinda et.al (2023), the studies in this particular sphere and scope have been limited and also dated where brand leadership assessment is concerned. Given that the QSR industry is so large and also contributes significantly to employment and capital generation in Malaysia, it is reasonably important to attempt to unearth, understand and assess the key variables that impact their success or even failures (Dikkatwar, De, and Laeequddin, 2023).

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions that will be addressed as a consequence of the review of literature and industry observations will be as follows.

1. How does service and product qualities impact perceived brand leadership for fast food restaurants in the QSR industry?

2. What is the relationship between product and service qualities on perceived brand leadership for fast food restaurants in the QSR industry?

1.4 Objective of the Study

The objective of this research is to address the research problem highlighted and will thus be focussed as follows:

1.   To assess the impact of service and product qualities on perceived brand leadership for fast food restaurants in the QSR industry.

2.   To evaluate the relationship between product and service qualities on perceived brand leadership for fast food restaurants in the QSR industry.

1.5 Significance of the Study

It would intuitively appear that both product qualities and service qualities are important components that can cause a customer to decide either for or against a particular brand of fast food. This may be in contrast to other restaurants where premium services example, location, ambience and customisation, may play more significant roles (Sulek & Hensley, 2014; Dikkatwar et al., 2023).

Additionally, the fast food restaurants within the QSR industry contribute significantly to a nation's income and also provide much-needed employment for its people (Susskind, 2000; Akgunduz et.al., 2023). Today's employment comes in various forms as waiters, cooks, and delivery agents. They also support a supply chain which comprises multiple stakeholders in various other industries, e.g., machinery, automation, software's and real estate.

The variables addressed in this research have only a few dated studies for Malaysia. Moreover, based on the above, it can be argued that these fast food restaurants within the QSR industry are important. It can be further suggested that fats food restaurants can be an opportunity for export of support services and products should they become successful. Here again, it can contribute to income for any country.

As such, this study aptly entitled 'The Impact and Relationship between Perceived Service and Product Quality to Brand Leadership within Fast-Food Restaurants in the QSR Industry' will to some extent, provide valuable and significant information and insights to allow for greater potential for those brands to succeed going forward.

1.6 Research Outline

This research will comprise five chapters overall. In chapter two it will review the literature and consider the journal papers in this field and also the theories that may apply to service and product qualities and brand leadership. Additionally, it will consider the conceptual framework and hypothesis for this research study. In chapter three, the research methodology will be outlined taking into consideration the research design, data collection, sampling, measurements and data analysis techniques. The results and discussion for chapter four will be done based on the research data and subsequent analysis. Lastly, chapter five will present an opportunity to conclude and make recommendations as befitting the outcomes of this research. It will also include the key constraints and limitations of this research study and point towards areas of research i.e., suggestions for future researchers to build upon based on current understandings.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review will focus on both the theoretical and conceptual constructs. The theoretical constructs will allow us to consider the variables and concepts applicable to our study area. From there, we look to derive the conceptual constructs that will be used to address our research questions. Thus we can then more precisely set out the connection or link between perceived service quality and product quality to brand leadership for fast food restaurants in the identified QSR industry.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation and Theoretical Framework

Attitudes can either be favourable or not depending on how the brand is managed, and this can impact the organisation (Curtis et al., 2009; Safeer & Zhou, 2023). As per Keller's (2008) and Martisiute, Vilutyte & Grundey's (2010) findings, a brand's strength lies in its ability to express its personality and establish a positive image in the minds of its customers. This way, it can position itself effectively and win its trust.

2.2.1 Brand Equity Model

According to the definition provided in the Cambridge Dictionary, a brand refers to a specific category of merchandise produced by a particular corporation and marketed under a unique name. As stated by Keller et al. (2013) and Aaker (1996), a brand is usually identified as a title, symbol, emblem, or design, or a combination of these elements that distinguishes a specific product or service from its competitors. In the business world, competitors may try to replicate a product, but it's important to remember that a brand sets a company apart. This is where the concept of brand equity comes into play. Brand equity, as defined by Shocker & Aaker (1993), refers to the value

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associated with a brand name and symbol. This value can either increase or decrease the worth of a product or service to a company and its customers.

In the realm of branding, there are various approaches to measuring brand equity. According to Feldwick (1996), these approaches can be categorized into three main groups. The first approach involves viewing the total value of a brand as a separate asset that can be sold or listed on a balance sheet. The second approach focuses on measuring the strength of customers' emotional attachment to a particular brand. Lastly, the third approach involves describing customers' associations and beliefs about a brand.

The goal of a branding team is to establish brand equity, which is critical to a company's success. To achieve this objective, there are two commonly used models - Aaker's Brand Equity Model and Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model. These models were developed by brand management experts Kevin Lane Keller and David Aaker, respectively, and provide a framework for companies to build and strengthen their brand equity. By doing so, companies can stand out in a crowded marketplace and gain a competitive edge.

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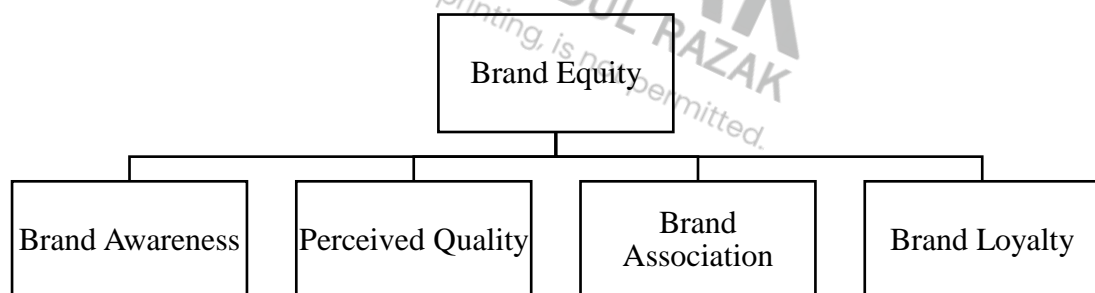
Figure 1: Aaker's (1996) Brand Equity Model

In Figure 1, Aaker's Brand Equity Model is shown as a tool for creating a brand strategy that can set a brand apart from competitors and lead to success. Aaker's CBBE model has four key dimensions - brand associations, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty - that form the foundation for an effective brand strategy. While other CBBE

dimensions may be mentioned in literature, these four are essential for creating a strong brand identity.

a) Brand Awareness

Brand awareness, according to Aaker's 1991 definition, is a potential customer's ability to recognize and remember that a brand belongs to a particular product category. This is where brand equity begins. When a consumer wants to make a purchase, information about a brand can influence their decision.

b) Perceived Quality

Perceived quality is a crucial dimension of brand equity, according to Aaker's 1991 study. This means that a product's perception can give it an advantage over its actual features. However, it's important to note that perception can be unreliable until supported by evidence.

c) Brand Association

A brand association is any aspect associated with a particular brand and is deeply ingrained in memory, according to Aaker's 1991 definition. These associations can greatly impact consumers, serving as a compelling reason to purchase the brand and creating positive attitudes and emotions towards it. In short, brand associations play a critical role in shaping consumer behavior and preferences.

d) Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is crucial for building brand equity. Aaker (1991) defines it as a measure of the likelihood of a customer switching to another brand, especially in response to changes in price or product features. Oliver (1997), on the other hand, views brand

loyalty as a strong commitment to consistently repurchase or use a preferred product or service in the future, regardless of situational influences or marketing efforts that may encourage customers to switch. Additionally, Rossiter and Percy (1987) suggest that brand loyalty is often characterized by a positive attitude towards a brand and repeated purchases of the same brand over time. Therefore, brand loyalty is a crucial aspect of building a strong brand.
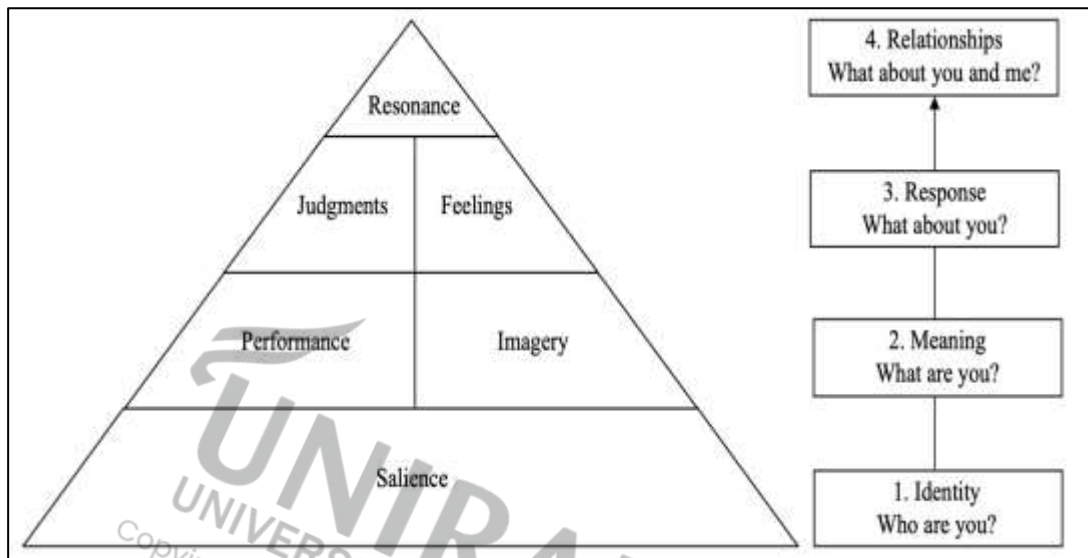
Figure 2: Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model (1993)

Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model is a widely recognized approach to building strong brand equity. This model emphasises the importance of consumer-based brand strength, which is achieved when the consumer has a favorable and unique recall of the brand. According to Keller, this creates a differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of a brand. To create a powerful brand, it is necessary to create meaningful images in customers' minds.

The CBBE Model outlines four key steps for building a strong brand, as illustrated in Figure 3. These steps include achieving brand identity, brand meaning, brand responses, and brand relationships. Each of these steps is crucial to creating a strong brand that resonates with customers.

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In addition to these steps, the CBBE Model identifies six brand building blocks that are essential to creating brand equity. These blocks include salience, performance, imagery, judgments, feelings, and resonance. Together, these building blocks create a harmonious relationship that strengthens the brand and creates a lasting impression in the minds of customers. By following the steps and building blocks outlined in the CBBE Model, businesses can create a strong brand that resonates with customers and sets them apart from their competitors.

a) Brand Identity

Keller (2001) stated that when it comes to building brand equity for a product or service, the primary factor is establishing brand awareness. This is defined as how customers view a business, also known as "brand salience" or awareness. In other words, creating a strong brand presence in the market is crucial for a business to be successful and recognized by its target audience.

b) Brand Meaning

In order to effectively promote a product or service, it is crucial to establish a brand identity that accurately reflects its essence and desired perception among consumers. This includes considering both the functional benefits it provides as well as the psychological and social needs it satisfies. As noted by Keller (2001), a brand's meaning encompasses all of these factors, and must be carefully crafted in order to achieve optimal success.

c) Brand Response

In the process of developing a brand, the third step is to establish favorable brand responses. This includes not only the assessment of the brand but also the feelings it evokes, both of which were outlined by Keller (2001). The perception of a brand is

influenced by its performance and the associations it conjures up. The emotional reactions and responses that consumers have towards a brand are referred to as brand feelings, which are closely tied to the social value that the brand represents.

d) Brand Relationships

Keller (2001) has identified four fundamental elements that must be present to establish a long-standing relationship between a brand and its consumer. These components include behavioural loyalty, attitudinal attachment, a sense of community, and active engagement. In addition, Michell et al. (2001) have found that loyalty factors are critical to the success of industrial brands. These findings could be valuable for companies to consider when devising their branding strategies and prioritizing their efforts.

2.2.2 Brand Leadership

The concept of brand leadership, initially introduced by Aaker in 1996, holds immense importance. Individuals often strive to adopt the symbolic value associated with a renowned brand to exhibit their social status and self-image (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000; Fakhreddin, 2022). To establish a dominant brand, it is crucial to have a well-structured strategy for the execution of brand identity and personality.
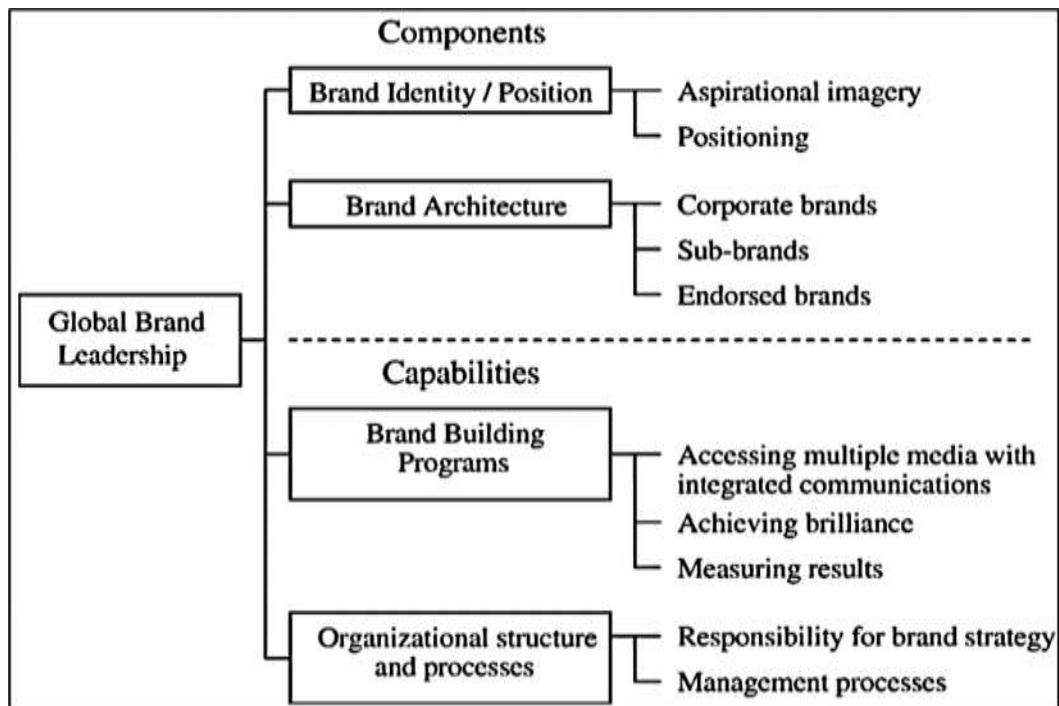
Figure 3: Brand Leadership Concept (Morhart, Herzog, & Tomczak, 2009).

In Figure 3, the Brand Leadership Concept is presented, which highlights the four main challenges that organizations must tackle to establish a strong brand. These challenges are organizational structure and processes, brand architecture, brand identity and position, and effective brand-building programs.

The initial challenge is to establish an organizational structure and processes that can effectively manage brand strategy. In today's highly competitive business environment, a strong brand provides significant advantages for organizations. To achieve this, He and Zhang (2022) suggest creating a culture that fosters brand nurturing within the organization.

The second challenge is to develop effective brand-building programs. Studies indicate that brand training has a positive impact on outcomes such as brand commitment and understanding. By providing employees with adequate training and motivation, companies can fulfill their brand promises to customers.

The third challenge is to determine which brands and sub-brands to support, modify, or motivate while understanding their relationship to one another. This is known as brand architecture, and it involves making strategic decisions about the hierarchy of brands and sub-brands to best serve the organization's goals.

Lastly, the fourth challenge is to establish a strong brand identity and position. Brand image plays a crucial role in differentiating a brand from its competitors, and understanding the brand identity can help organizations effectively communicate with targeted customers. This involves developing a unique brand identity that resonates with customers and effectively communicates the brand's values, benefits, and personality (Padela, Wooliscroft, and Ganglmair-Wooliscroft, 2023). By overcoming these four challenges, organizations can establish a strong brand that provides a competitive advantage and builds customer loyalty.

2.3 Review of Prior Empirical Research

The primary objective of this research is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the impact of product quality and service quality on brand leadership. In order to accomplish this, we will conduct a thorough review of previous empirical research, with a particular emphasis on the fast food industry. This review will encompass a broad range of topics, including customer satisfaction with respect to product and service quality, the factors that influence purchase intentions in the fast food industry, and the correlation between product quality, service quality, and brand leadership. Through our analysis, we hope to gain a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between these variables and provide valuable insights for businesses seeking to improve their brand leadership.

According to the research conducted by Chow et al. (2007), the key factors that determine the success of a restaurant business are superior service quality, excellent value, and customer satisfaction. The latest data provided by the Department of Statistics, Malaysia, in Figure 1, depicting the revenue of the Wholesale & Retail Trade, Food & Beverages, and Accommodation sectors in the second quarter of 2022, reveals that the service sector's performance by segment has significantly increased from 9.2%

in the first quarter of 2022 to 26.1% in the second quarter of 2022. As highlighted by Kotler (2011), customers today have diverse needs and wants and expect a wide range of features and benefits to be offered to them. Therefore, when making decisions about selecting a restaurant, various criteria such as product packages, service packages, and other factors must be taken into account.
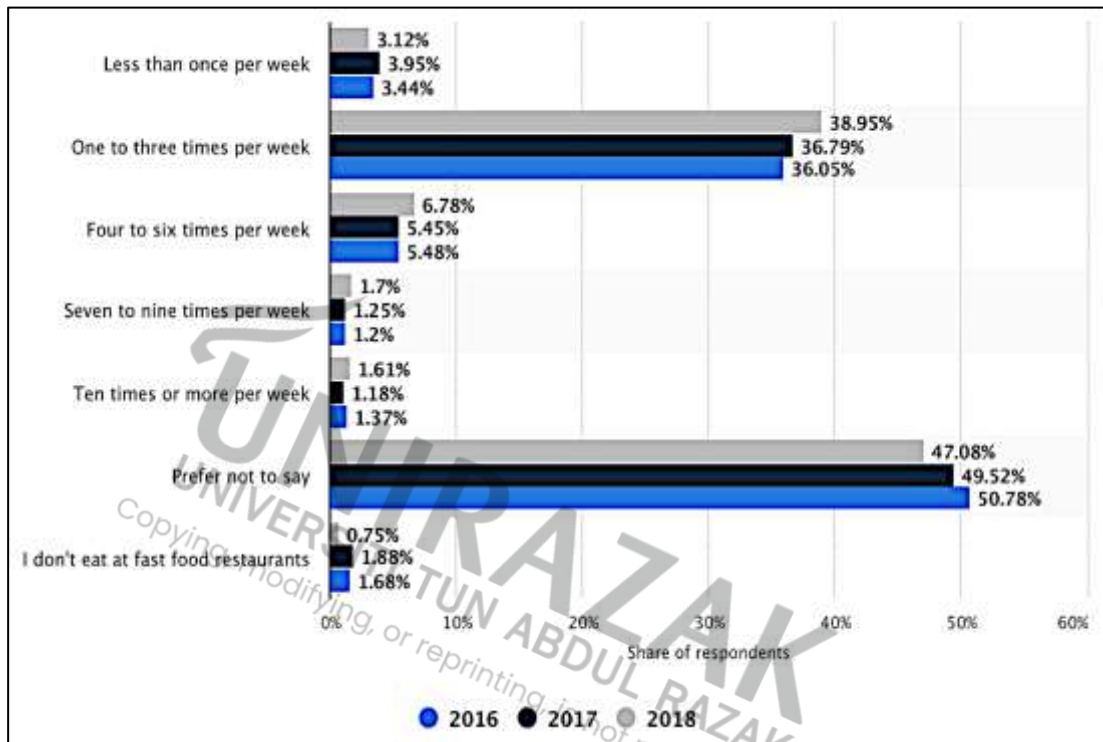
According to Statista.com, Figure 4 shows the average amount of fast food consumed per week in Malaysia from 2016 to 2018.

Based on the data presented in Figure 2, it is evident that the average weekly intake of fast food has been on the rise from 2016 to 2018. The percentage of consumers who reported consuming fast food one to three times per week increased from 36.05% in 2016 to 36.79% in 2017 and further to 38.95% in 2018. This indicates a steady growth in fast food consumption over the years. Furthermore, the data reveals a decline in the percentage of consumers who did not eat at fast food restaurants, dropping from 1.68% in 2016 to 0.75% in 2018. These findings suggest a noticeable shift in consumer behavior towards fast food consumption.

The study conducted by Chang et al. (2016) sheds light on the significant impact of brand perception on consumer behavior. It has been found that consumers tend to choose a brand or service that is perceived as a leader in the industry. This decision is not solely based on the quality or value of the product or service, but also on how well the brand aligns with their self-image. Therefore, it is crucial for businesses to effectively manage their brand and understand how branding success can create positive customer perception and loyalty. As noted by Doyle (2003), brands are the foundation of marketing and business strategy. Aaker (1996) proposed the concept of brand leadership as a dimension of brand equity, which has gained recognition and respect in the academic community. Moreover, Najjinda, Sendawula, Otengei, Walugembe, and Kimuli, (2023) also highlight the critical role of building brand equity in driving a company's success. Thus, in today's market, it is imperative to consider the impact of both product and service quality on brand leadership.

2.3.1 Fast Food Industry

During the 1980s, Malaysia experienced a period of rapid economic growth and significant changes in occupational patterns, which led to notable shifts in dietary habits across the country. Among these changes, the emergence and subsequent popularity of fast food industry during the 1990s was particularly noteworthy. According to data provided by the Department of Statistics Malaysia, the number of fast food restaurants in the country increased from 1621 to 2597 between 2010 and 2015, indicating a sustained growth in the industry (Xiao, Yang & Iqbal, 2019). It is worth noting that the fast food franchising sector accounts for approximately 32% of the total 6000 fast food outlets in Malaysia. The QSR or fast food market is currently valued at $493 million (RM1.8 billion) locally, highlighting the significant economic impact of the industry.

2.3.2 Product Quality

As per the research conducted by Sekhar, Krishna, Kayal, and Rana (2022), food quality is an all-encompassing factor that comprises various food characteristics under a single umbrella. It includes elements like temperature, menu item variety, taste, and presentation, which collectively define the quality of food. The research also highlights that food quality is the most significant aspect that influences a customer's purchase decision, provided that the service quality and overall restaurant environment are up to the mark. This suggests that the correlation between food quality and customer satisfaction plays a crucial role in determining the customer's buying behavior. Additionally, maintaining good product quality has a positive impact on brand image and equity. Studies conducted by Baltas & Argouslidis (2007) and Junyean (2007) further support this claim. Hilman (2009) and Eze et al., (2012) have emphasized that product quality is a strategic tool utilized by global brands to gain a competitive edge and improve their brand equity. Thus, it is evident that ensuring high food quality is essential for any business to succeed.

2.3.3 Service Quality

The role of service quality in driving customer loyalty has been a topic of interest among researchers, as it has been established by Iqbal et al.'s research in 2016. The findings suggest that service quality is a crucial factor in influencing customer loyalty. However, the impact of the four dimensions of service quality on loyalty can vary across different countries, as customer preferences vary. Choudhury's study in 2013 also found that service quality plays a significant role in customers' intention to make a purchase. This is further supported by Boulding et al.'s research in 1993, which highlights the importance of improving service quality in attracting customers and encouraging repeat purchases.

Despite the abundance of research on service quality in various sectors, such as telecommunications, education, and banking, as evidenced by He & Li's research in 2011, Malik et al.'s study in 2011, and Nawaz & Usman's investigation in 2011, the relationship between service quality and brand equity, particularly brand leadership, has not received much attention. As noted by He & Li in 2011, there is a gap in the literature on the correlation between service quality and brand leadership. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by exploring the impact of service quality on brand leadership, which is a crucial dimension of brand equity.

The significance of service quality in establishing and maintaining brand leadership is well-established, as highlighted by Varghese's study in 2010. Thus, providing quality service to customers is an essential factor that should be prioritized by businesses that aim to establish and maintain brand leadership (Sekhar et al., 2022). By doing so, businesses can enhance their brand equity and gain a competitive advantage in the market.

2.3.4 Relationship between Product Quality, Service Quality and Brand Leadership

A study was conducted by Hanaysha and Ghani in 2013 to explore the impact of product quality and service quality on brand leadership in Malaysia. This research is particularly relevant to the automobile industry where these factors play a significant role in influencing customer purchase decisions. According to Keller (2008), leading brands are able to influence customer decisions by providing unique values that distinguish their products or services from competitors. To achieve a position of leadership in the market, a brand must differentiate itself with something that cannot be easily replicated or imitated, as stated by Chopdar and Paul (2023). Aaker (1996), a well-respected academic in the field of brand equity, introduced the concept of brand leadership as a crucial dimension of brand equity. With this in mind, the study aims to address the gap

in research by exploring the role of brand leadership in contributing to overall brand equity.

2.4 Proposed Conceptual Framework

During our research, we have undertaken an examination of a proposed conceptual framework that was presented by Hanasya J. et al. (2013). This particular framework has been designed with two independent variables and a single dependent variable, which all play a central role in our analysis. To gain a deeper understanding of the framework in question, we suggest referring to the visual representation provided in Figure 5 below. This diagram offers a clear and concise overview of the key elements of the framework, allowing for a more comprehensive comprehension of its structure and function.
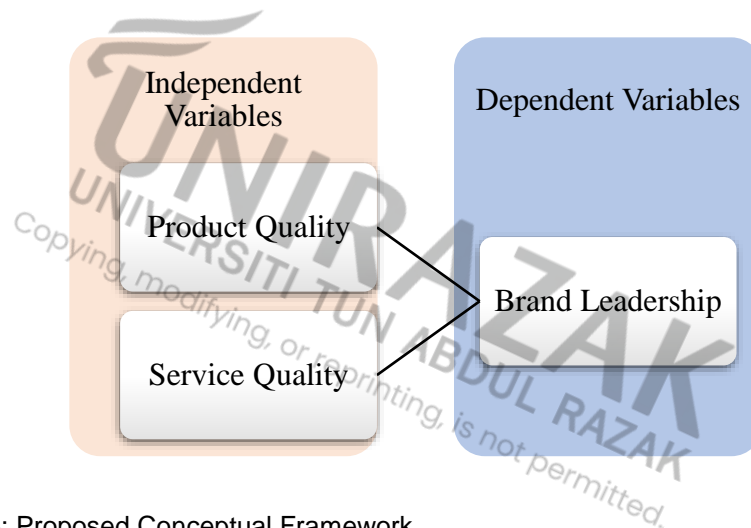
Figure 5: Proposed Conceptual Framework

The study at hand presents a comprehensive framework that encompasses several independent variables, a hypothesis, and a dependent variable. Its primary objective is to examine the impact of product quality and service quality on brand leadership. For the purpose of this research, product quality is specifically defined as the overall characteristics of food, which are deemed acceptable by consumers. It is noteworthy that service quality, as highlighted by Raza, Jawaid, and Hassan (2015), has a significant positive influence on customer satisfaction. Therefore, this study aims to explore the interplay between these variables to gain a deeper understanding of their impact on brand leadership.

2.5 Research Hypothesis

In the field of brand management, there has been a lack of empirical research that effectively measures the impact of both product and service quality on brand leadership. Therefore, it is imperative to conduct a thorough analysis based on the concept put forth by Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000), which suggests that brand equity dimensions become brand leadership when the level of brand management reaches leadership status. In light of this, two hypotheses have been formulated: Hypothesis 1 (H1) asserts that there is a significant correlation between product quality and brand leadership for fast food restaurants in the QSR industry, while Hypothesis 2 (H2) posits that there is a significant correlation between service quality and brand leadership for fast food restaurants in the QSR industry.

2.6 Summary of Chapter 2

Prior to embarking on their study, other researchers had already established that a favorable correlation exists between the quality of a product, the quality of service, and brand leadership across diverse industries. By employing the suggested conceptual framework, it is suitable to explore the link between product quality, service quality, and brand leadership in distinct fast-food establishments situated in Malaysia. It is plausible that the outcomes may vary, depending on the tastes and inclinations of individual fast food patrons.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The following chapter provides an in-depth explanation of the research design and methodology that was employed in this particular study. It furnishes readers with an overview of the research design, sampling procedures, data collection methodology, variables and measurement, and techniques for data analysis. All the aforementioned aspects have been tailored to fit the research objectives and questions. As we come towards the end of the chapter, we conclude with a summary that encapsulates the key points discussed throughout the entire chapter.

3.2 Research Design

The primary objective of the research was to look into the effects of product quality and service quality on brand leadership within the fast food sector. To uncover insights, the study adopted a theory-then-research methodology, which involved formulating a hypothesis based on pre-existing theories and conducting empirical tests to verify it (Akgunduz, Nisari & Sungur 2023). To accomplish this, the research developed a theoretical model that pinpointed the variables that were presumed to shape brand leadership in the industry. This research then developed hypotheses reflecting the correlations between these variables and fashioned research measures to test these hypotheses. The research measures comprised of questionnaires and experiments, which were utilized to collect quantitative data from a representative sample of individuals who frequently patronise fast food brands in Malaysia.

One of the most significant advantages of this approach is that it allows researchers to test their hypotheses using objective measures, ensuring that the research findings are reliable and valid (Baba et al., 2023). Additionally, the researchers were mindful of

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ethical considerations throughout the study, making sure that the participants' rights and privacy were safeguarded, and that they were not subjected to any harm or discomfort during the research procedure.

The structured survey employed in this research was designed to address specific research questions. The survey contained questions that aimed to gauge the participants' perceptions of product quality, service quality, and brand leadership within the fast food sector (Dikkatwar, De, & Laeequddin, 2023). The study's outcomes are expected to offer valuable insights into the factors that influence brand leadership within the industry and inform strategies for improving it.

3.3 Population, Sample and Sampling Procedures

In conducting a study, it is important to determine the appropriate sample size for the target population. However, there is no definitive answer to what constitutes an ideal sample size. According to Saunders (2009), the sample size should range from 10 to 30 percent of the population being studied, while Guest, Bunce & Johnson (2006) suggest that as few as twelve interviewees may yield theoretical saturation, and six interviewees may suffice for high-level themes.

In deciding on the sample size, several factors need to be taken into consideration. First, the absolute sample size should be considered instead of the sample's relative size in relation to the entire population. Second, statistics and the central limit theorem should be taken into account. The closer the distribution is to a normal distribution, the larger the absolute sample size should be. In any situation, the minimum sample size should be 30, as it has the best chance of providing a reasonable chance of distribution. If the sample size is less than 30, it may be reasonable to use the entire sample (Tashman, Spadafora & Wagner, (2023).

Third, time and cost should also be considered. According to Bryman & Bell (2003), the law of diminishing returns begins to apply at a sample size of 1000, making it less worthwhile to interview research participants. Finally, non-response is another factor that should be taken into account. Respondents may be less motivated than the researcher or may be uninterested in the research. Additionally, respondents who do respond may provide irrelevant information. Therefore, careful consideration and planning must be undertaken to ensure the most appropriate sample size is used for a study.

According to a study conducted by Hair et al. in 2010, the minimum sample size required for a model with five or fewer constructs, each with at least three items having high item communalities (0.6 or higher), is 100. For models with seven or fewer constructs and modest communalities (0.5), the minimum sample size required is 150. If models include seven or fewer constructs with low communalities (0.45) and/or multiple under-identified constructs (fewer than three items), the sample size should be 300. In cases of models with a large number of constructs, some with lower communalities and/or fewer than three measured items, the minimum sample size should be 500. Therefore, to ensure that our research objectives are met, we will have more than 100 respondents for our study.

According to McCombes (2019), the nonprobability convenience sampling method is a sampling technique that is based on the willingness and availability of the respondents to participate in a study by answering a questionnaire. In line with this, the present study employed the use of convenience sampling to select a sample of 107 participants from the fast food industry. The choice of this sampling method was informed by its suitability in obtaining data from a specific population with relative ease and convenience. Consequently, this sampling method was deemed appropriate for the current study as it allowed for the selection of participants who were readily available and willing to participate.

3.4 Data Collection Method

In order to gather data for our research, we opted for an online survey method and distributed questionnaires to our target population. As Remenyi et al. (1998) have pointed out, this method involves collecting primary data directly from the individuals or groups being studied. Surveys can be used for a variety of purposes, including explanation, description, hypothesis testing, guiding action, and analyzing relationships between constructs, as stated by Burton (2000). However, it's important to keep in mind that there is no one-size-fits-all survey, and it's crucial to take the necessary time to carefully prepare and implement the questionnaire (Remenyi et al., 1998; Tashman, Spadafora & Wagner, 2023) to ensure the success of the survey.

3.5 Survey Questionnaire

In order to gather data quickly and easily, an online survey was conducted. The survey included five sections that covered a range of topics. The first section focused on demographic information such as gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, monthly income, education level, occupation, and nationality. The second section aimed to gather information on purchasing behavior and asked respondents how often they consume fast food per month and which fast food restaurant they visit most frequently.

The remaining three sections of the survey used a five-point Likert scale to measure frequency of behavior. This scale, as suggested by Munshi (2014), ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Specifically, section three focused on brand selection, section four on product and service quality, and section five on brand leadership.

It is worth noting that the questions utilized in the survey were adapted from previous research studies by Garvin (1998) and Hanasyha (2013) with minor modifications. For those interested in reviewing the survey questions themselves, they can be found in the Appendix section of this research. Overall, this survey served as an efficient and comprehensive means of gathering important data on a range of topics.

3.6 Variables and Measurement

The present research considers the concept of brand leadership as the dependent variable, which is evaluated by examining the impact of product and service quality on fast food brands at a national level. The study incorporates demographic factors such as gender, age group, ethnicity, marital status, total monthly household income, education level, occupation, and nationality to determine the significant level and relationship with the brand leadership strategy. The demographic data is obtained from Section One (1) of the questionnaire, which provides comprehensive insights into the preferences and choices of the respondents (Kashan et.al., 2023).

Moreover, the study aims to investigate the purchasing profile of the participants, which includes their frequency of consuming fast food on a monthly basis and their most visited fast food restaurant. This approach is taken to assess the significant impact on other variables, such as product quality, service quality, and brand leadership. Six (6) questions are posed under each variable, and the measurement items are adapted from previous research to fit the purpose of this study (Keller, Parameswaran, & Jacob, 2013; AlShehhi, Cherian, Farouk & Al Nahyan, 2023, and Dikkatwar, De, & Laeequddin, 2023).

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, content validity is employed, which refers to the extent that the measure content of the concept in question. This is done to ensure that the selection of scale items extends beyond just empirical issues to also include theoretical and practical considerations (Ghosh, Jhamb, & Dhiman, 2023). The study thus incorporates a comprehensive approach to investigate the concept of brand leadership and its relationship with product and service quality, demographic factors, and purchasing profile.

3.7 Reliability Test

In order to assess the influence of product and service quality on brand leadership in the fast food industry, a questionnaire with a total of 29 questions was developed. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, Cavana (2001) recommends the use of the Cronbach alpha method, which is widely recognized within the research community. A Cronbach alpha value of 0.70 or higher is considered to be a good indicator of reliability and is generally accepted as an appropriate threshold for evaluating the instrument's effectiveness.

3.8 Data Analysis Techniques

As part of this research project, we will be utilizing the powerful SPSS software to conduct a thorough analysis of the data collected. The research will be employing two distinct types of analysis techniques to gain deeper insights into the data: descriptive analysis and inferential analysis (Najinda, 2023). Through these methods, we will be able to extract meaningful patterns and trends that will help inform our research conclusions.

3.8.1 Descriptive Analysis

By conducting a thorough descriptive analysis, we were able to gather valuable demographic data and purchasing profiles. As Malhotra (2007) explains, descriptive research serves various purposes, including outlining the characteristics of relevant groups, estimating the percentage of units exhibiting certain behaviors within a specific population, identifying perceptions of product characteristics, determining the association between marketing variables, and making precise predictions. Such research provides a comprehensive understanding of the market, enabling businesses to make informed decisions that align with their objectives.

3.8.2 Inferential Analysis

The procedure employed for the analysis of the data collected through the distributed questionnaires involved the use of several statistical tools. These tools included the normality test, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and multiple regression analysis. The normality test was used to determine if the data met the assumption of being normally distributed, which is a prerequisite for conducting parametric statistical analysis. Skewness and kurtosis values were used to assess the distribution shape of the data interval and ratio level. ANOVA, on the other hand, was used to separate the systematic components from random factors, which helped account for the observed aggregate variability within the data set. It was also used to determine the impact of independent variables in a regression research on the dependent variable. Finally, multiple regression analysis was used to identify the value of the single dependent variable using the known values of the independent variables (Owusu Kwateng, Tetteh, Atchulo, & Opoku-Mensah, 2022; Rezaei, Giovando, Rezaei, & Sadraei, 2022; Jha, Kapoor, Kaul, and Srivastava, 2022). This comprehensive analysis helped to determine the level of significance of each attribute, which was critical in drawing accurate conclusions from the collected data.

3.9 Summary of Chapter 3

The method employed in this study involved the administration of surveys through online platforms. The obtained data was subjected to a rigorous analysis process using a combination of descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. This approach ensured the accuracy and reliability of the results obtained from the research.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1   Introduction

The focus of this study is to examine the influence of product and service quality on the

attainment of brand leadership in the fast food sector. In this section, we will explore the

findings of the research and evaluate them in relation to our research objectives. The

aims include examining how exceptional product and service quality can enhance brand

leadership and establishing a positive correlation between the two factors.

4.2   Respondent Profile

The results of the study conducted on a sample of 107 individuals are displayed in the

following table. The sample comprised of 38 males (35.5%) and 69 females (64.5%).

The mean value for gender was 1.6449, while the standard deviation value was 48081.

The age range of the respondents varied from below 21 years to above 60 years. The

majority of the participants fell between the ages of 21 and 30, with 76 respondents

(71%) belonging to this age group. There were 20 respondents (18.7%) between the

ages of 31 and 40, while only 7 respondents (6.5%) were between the ages of 41 and

50. The number of respondents between 51 and 60 years old was only two (1.9%), while

one respondent (0.9%) fell below 21 years old, and one respondent (0.9%) was above

60 years old. The mean value for the age of respondents was 2.4019, while the standard

deviation value was 78740.

In terms of ethnicity, the majority of the respondents were Malay, with 95 individuals

(88.8%) belonging to this ethnic group. The remaining respondents belonged to other

ethnicities, with 3 respondents (2.8%) being Chinese and 3 respondents (2.8%) being

Indian. Only 6 respondents (5.6%) belonged to other ethnicities. The mean value for ethnicity was 1.2523, while the standard deviation value was 57023.

Regarding marital status, the majority of the respondents were single, with 62 individuals (57.9%) belonging to this category. 43 respondents (40.2%) were married, while one respondent (0.9%) was divorced, and one respondent (0.9%) was widowed. The mean value for marital status was 1.4486, while the standard deviation value was 57023.

In terms of gross monthly household income, the highest number of respondents (26.2%) had an income between RM 4,000 and RM 6,000. The second-highest income bracket was RM 2,001 to RM 4,000, with 23.4% of the respondents earning this amount. 16.8% of the respondents earned between RM 6,001 and RM 8,000, while an equal percentage (16.8%) earned more than RM 10,001. Only 7.5% of the respondents had an income less than RM 2,000. The mean value for gross monthly household income was 3.4766, while the standard deviation value was 1.54398.

In terms of educational level, the majority of the respondents held a degree, with 68 individuals (63.6%) belonging to this category. 23 respondents (21.5%) held a master's degree, while 7 respondents (6.5%) held a diploma. Only 4 respondents (3.7%) held other professional qualifications, and 4 respondents (3.7%) held a secondary school certificate. Only one respondent (0.9%) held a PhD. The mean value for educational level was 3.2056, while the standard deviation value was 87673.

Regarding the respondent's occupation, the majority of the respondents worked in the private sector, with 59 individuals (55.1%) belonging to this category. 27 respondents (25.25%) worked in the government sector, while 10 respondents (9.3%) were self-employed. Only 6 respondents (5.6%) were students, and 3 respondents (2.8%) held

other occupations. One respondent (0.9%) was unemployed, and one respondent (0.9%) was retired. The mean value for occupation was 4.2897, while the standard deviation value was 1.28862.

Table 1: Respondent's Profile

Variable	Frequency (n=107)	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Gender			1.6449	.48081
Male	38	35.5		
Female	69	64.5		
Age			2.4019	.78740
Below 21 Years Old	1	0.9		
21 – 30 Years Old	76	71.0		
31 – 40 Years Old	20	18.7		
41 – 50 Years Old	7	6.5		
51 – 60 Years Old	2	1.9		
Above 60 Years Old	1	0.9		
Ethnicity			1.2523	.76594
Malay	95	88.8		
Chinese	3	2.8		
Indian	3	2.8		
Others	6	5.6		
Marital Status			1.4486	.57023
Single	62	57.9		
Married	43	40.2		
Divorced	1	0.9		
Widowed	1	0.9		
Gross Monthly Household Income	8	7.5	3.4766	1.54398
Less than RM 2,000	25	23.4		
	28	26.2		

	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Std. Deviation
Between Rm 2,001 – RM 4,000	18	16.8		
	10	9.3		
Between RM 4,001 – RM 6,000	18	16.8		
Between RM 6.000 – RM 8,000				
Between RM 8,000 – RM 10,000				
More than RM 10,001				
Education Level			3.2056	.87673
Secondary School	4	3.7		
Diploma	7	6.5		
Bachelor Degree	68	63.6		
Master Degree	23	21.5		
Doctoral Degree	1	0.9		
Other Professional Qualification	4	3.7		
Occupation			4.2897	1.28862
Student	6	5.6		
Self Employed	10	9.3		
Unemployed	1	0.9		
Government Sector	27	25.2		
Private Sector	59	55.1		
Retired	1	0.9		
Others	3	2.8		
Nationality			1.000	.0000
Malaysian	107	100		
Non-Malaysian	-	-		

4.3 Purchasing Profile

4.3.1 Do you consume fast food?

It appears that fast food consumption is quite prevalent among the respondents. As per the data presented in Table 2, a significant majority of 106 respondents, which accounts for 99.1% of the total respondents, confirmed that they consume fast food. Only one respondent, constituting a mere 0.9%, stated that they do not consume fast food. It is interesting to note that the mean value for fast food consumption was calculated to be M=1.0093, with a standard deviation value of SD=09667. These findings are further supported by the bar chart provided below, which offers a more visual representation of the results.

Table 2: Do you Consume fast food

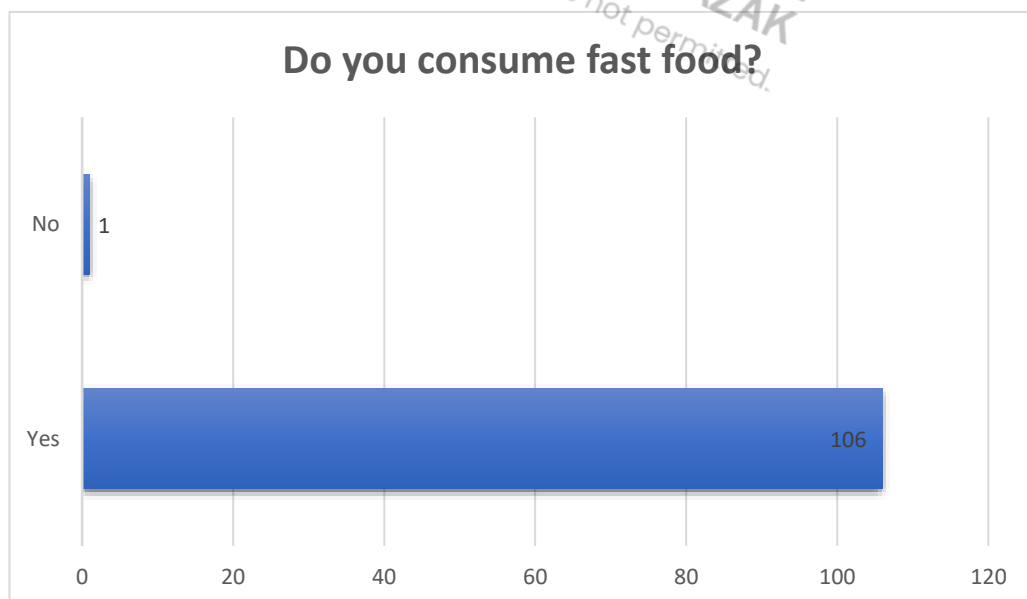| Variable	Frequency (n=107)	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Do you consume fast food			1.0093	.09667
Yes	106	99.1		
No	1	0.9		

Figure 6: Fast Food Consumption

4.3.2   How often do you consume fast food monthly?

Based on the findings, it was discovered that nearly half of the respondents (45.8%) consumed fast food once or twice a month. Moreover, almost one-third of the participants (29.9%) reported having fast food 3-4 times a month. About 12.1% of the respondents stated having fast food 5-6 times per month. Interestingly, only 8.4% of the respondents reported consuming fast food more than seven times per month, whereas just 3.7% of the respondents claimed that they did not consume fast food at all in a month. As shown in Table 3 and the bar chart below, the frequency of fast food consumption on a monthly basis was depicted.

Table 3: How often do you consume fast food on a monthly basis?

Variable	Frequency (n=107)	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
How Often Do you consume fast food on a monthly basics			1.9439	1.12293
1 – 2 times	49	45.8		
3 – 4 times	32	29.9		
5 – 6 times	13	12.1		
7 times or more	9	8.4		
N/A	4	3.7		

Figure 7: Bar Chart 2 – Fast Food Consumption Frequency

4.3.3 Which fast food brand do you frequent the most?

The survey results regarding fast food preferences among the respondents have been compiled in table 4 below. It is worth noting that a majority of the respondents, specifically 73 individuals or 68.2%, preferred McDonald's. Following closely behind were 23 respondents or 21.5% who chose Kentucky Fried Chicken as their fast food outlet of choice. Burger King, however, only managed to garner 6 respondents or 5.6% of the total. Even less popular were A&W and Marry Brown, which were chosen by 3 and 1 respondents, respectively, out of the total sample size. Texas Chicken also had one respondent, equivalent to 0.9%. To gain a better understanding of the results, kindly refer to the accompanying bar chart that provides a visual representation of the data.

Table 4 Which fast food brand do you frequent the most?

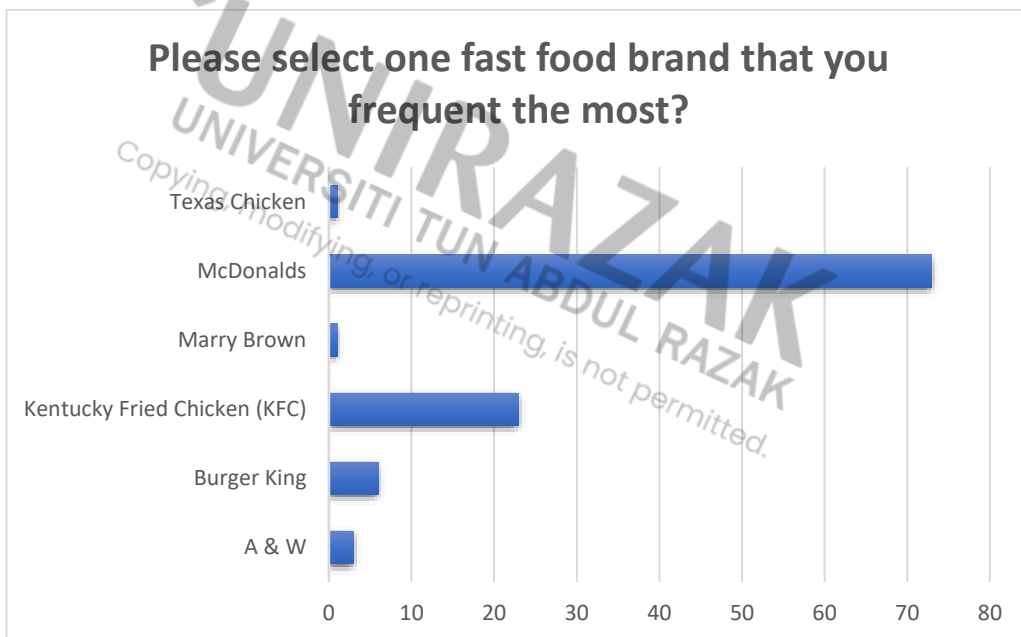| Variable	Frequency (n=107)	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Please select one fast food brand that you frequent the most			4.2897	1.15750
A & W	3	2.8		
Burger King	6	5.6		
Kentucky Fried Chicken	23	21.5		
Marry Brown	1	0.9		
McDonalds	73	68.2		
Texas Chicken	1	0.9		

Figure 8: Fast Food that you frequent Bar Chart 3

4.4   Normality Test

The normality test is a statistical tool utilized to assess the normality of research data. This test is crucial in determining the appropriate statistical methods to be used in analyzing the data. The test is based on two essential values; skewness and kurtosis. Skewness measures the degree of symmetry in the data distribution, while kurtosis measures the degree of peakedness in the same distribution. Both of these values are influenced by the data interval and ratio level. (Owusu Kwateng et.al., 2022; Rezaei et.al., 2022; Jha et.al., 2022).

In this study, the normality test was conducted on three variables; product quality, service quality, and brand leadership. The results of the test are presented in Table 5. The findings indicate that the skewness values range from -.492 to -.588, while the kurtosis values range from .182 to .479. These values reveal that all the three variables have negatively skewed data distributions, which are also platykurtic.

Overall, the normality test results suggest that the skewness and kurtosis values fall within the +/-2 range, indicating that all the data in this study can be assumed to be normally distributed. This means that the data can be analyzed using parametric statistical methods, which assume a normal distribution. Therefore, the results of the study can be considered reliable and valid, as the normality test has confirmed the normality of the data.

Table 5: Normality Test

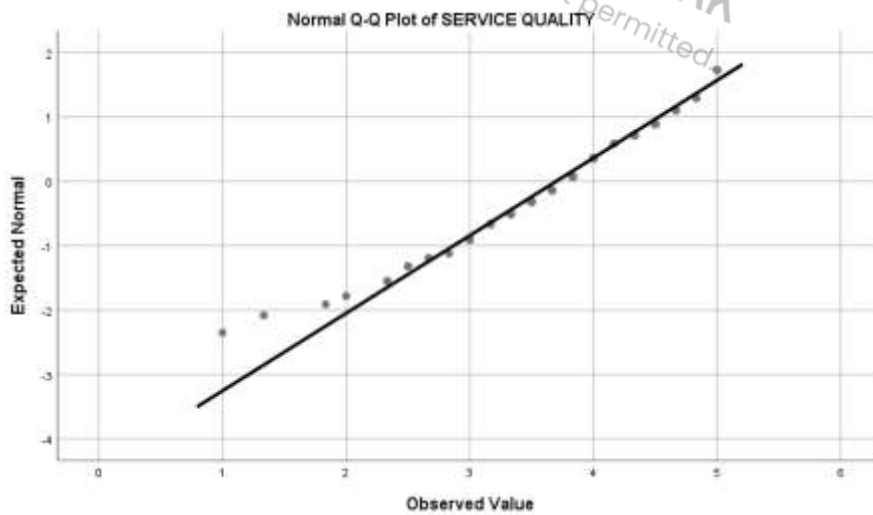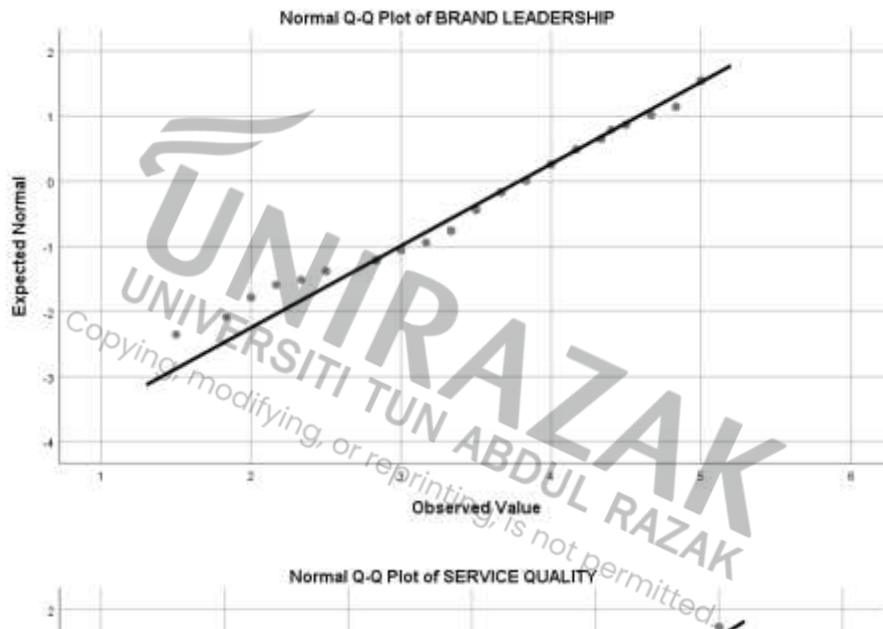| Variable	Skewness	Kurtosis
Product Quality	-.492	.428
Service Quality	-.588	.479
Brand Leadership	-.515	.182

Figure 9: QQ plot evaluating product quality, service quality and brand leadership

4.5   Reliability Test

In this study, Table 6 reveals the results of the reliability analysis conducted for product quality, service quality, and brand leadership. The range value for reliability falls between .849 to .861. Cronbach alpha for product quality is .849, followed by .856 for service quality, and .861 for brand leadership. All three Cronbach alpha values are deemed excellent. Therefore, based on the data, it can be inferred that all the data are reliable for use in this study.

Table 6: Reliability Analysis

Section	No of Item	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Assumed
Product Quality	6	.849	Excellent
Service Quality	6	.856	Excellent
Brand Leadership	6	.861	Excellent

4.6   Objective 1

To examine the influence of product quality and service quality on brand leadership

4.6.1 Multi Regression Analysis

Multiple regression is a statistical method that builds on simple linear regression. It helps to forecast the value of a variable by analyzing the relationships between two or more other variables. In this case, the variable we want to predict is brand leadership, which is the dependent variable. The independent variables, which are product quality and service quality, are the factors used to predict the value of the dependent variable.

Table 7: Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.590[a]	.348	.335	.64823
a. Predictors: (Constant), product quality, service quality.				
b. Dependent Variable: brand leadership				

The data presented in the table showcases the outcomes of various regression analyses that have been conducted to investigate the correlation between product quality, service quality, and brand leadership. The Adjusted R-square (R2) value, which is a measure of the model's goodness of fit, is 0.335 or 33.5%. This percentage indicates that the two independent variables, product quality and service quality, can explain approximately one-third of the variations in brand leadership. It's worth noting that the remaining 66.5% of the variations are due to other factors, which have not been considered in this study. These findings suggest that product quality and service quality are essential contributors to brand leadership but are not the only determining factors.

4.6.2 ANOVA Analysis

When evaluating the suitability of a model, relying solely on the R square value derived from regression analysis is not sufficient. It is crucial to take into account the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) table as well, as this helps to determine the significance of the interdependent variables. By considering both the R square value and the ANOVA table, one can gain a more accurate understanding of the model's effectiveness and make informed decisions based on the results.

Table 8: Anova Analysis

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	23.116	2	11.558	27.506	.000[b]
	Residual	43.281	103	.420		
	Total	66.397	105			
a. Predictors: (Constant), product quality, service quality.						
b. Dependent Variable: brand leadership						

When comparing three or more means in a single variable, the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used. It utilizes the F test to compare more than two means of a single factor at the same time. Based on Table 8, the model is highly significant and influential because the F ratio is less than 0.01 significance level (F=27.506, p-value=0.000). Therefore, it can be concluded that product quality and service quality greatly influence brand leadership.

4.6.3 Regression Coefficient

According to the information displayed in Table 9, the coefficient for the independent variables was analyzed to determine their impact on the model. The results indicate that only service quality had a statistically significant effect on the equation, as its p-value was below 0.05. From the table, it can be observed that service quality had the highest Beta value (β=.435), which suggests that it was the primary factor in contributing to brand leadership and had the most significant influence.

Table 9: Coefficients of Independent Variables

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.

		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.509	.319		4.733	.000
	Product quality	.203	.106	.203	1.911	.059
	Service quality	.417	.102	.435	4.092	.000

a. Dependent Variable: brand leadership (**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level)

4.7   Objective 2

4.7.1 Correlation between Variable

The purpose of correlation in this study is to determine the connection between the independent and dependent variables. Conducting a correlational test is crucial for researchers who want to achieve their research objectives and obtain accurate results. The results of this test can also help answer research questions. Table 10 displays the interpretation of the correlation coefficient according to Guilford's Rule of Thumb.

Table 10: Interpretation for Correlation Coefficient by Guilford's Rule of Thumb.

Strength of Relationship	
<0.20	Almost negligible relationship
0.21 – 0.40	Low correlation; definite but small relationship
0.41 – 0.70	Moderate correlation; substantial relationship
0.71 – 0.90	High correlation, marked relationship
>0.90	Very high correlation; very dependable relationship

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4.7.2 To demonstrate the positive relationship between product quality, service quality and brand leadership.

The following table, Table 11, displays the correlation between product quality and brand leadership. According to the table, there is a significant and positive correlation between the two (r=.492, p<0.05). Using Guilford's Rule of Thumb, this correlation can be classified as moderate. This positive correlation suggests that when the quality of a product increases, so does the brand's leadership.

Additionally, the results indicate a significant and positive correlation between service quality and brand leadership (r=.570, p<0.05). According to Guilford's Rule of Thumb, this correlation can also be classified as moderate. Similar to the previous correlation, this positive correlation implies that when the quality of service increases, it leads to an increase in the brand's leadership.

Table 11: Association between product quality, service quality and brand leadership.

Variable	Brand leadership	
	r	p
Product Quality	.492**	.000
Service Quality	.570**	.000

** Significant at level 0.05 (2-tailed)

4.8   Chapter Summary

To summarize, the research findings in this study align with those of Hanasya, J. et al. (2013), which demonstrated a positive and significant relationship between product and service quality and brand leadership. This chapter details the analysis of the survey questionnaire and confirms the validity and reliability of the measurements used in hypothesis testing.

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises of interpretation of the analysis done in the Chapter 4. The summary of the findings are concluded including the implications in the prospect of theoretical and managerial, limitations of the study and the recommendations for future research.

5.2 Discussion of Research Finding

The research has two objectives:

1. To assess the impact of service and product qualities on perceived brand leadership for fast food restaurants in the QSR industry.

2. To evaluate the relationship between product and service qualities on perceived brand leadership for fast food restaurants in the QSR industry.

In Chapter 4, the study found that 73 (68.2%) respondents chose McDonald's, followed by 23 (21.5%) who chose Kentucky Fried Chicken. Only 6 (5.6%) selected Burger King, and 3 (2.8%) respondents chose A&W. Only one respondent (0.9%) chose Marry Brown and Texas Chicken. The results indicate that most respondents, 106 (99.1%), consume fast food, with only one (0.9%) respondent stating that they do not. These findings support Pingali's (2016) study that shows an increasing trend among Malaysian households to adopt western-style fast food.

The normality test for the three variables, product quality, service quality, and brand leadership, was conducted and found to be normally distributed. The Cronbach alpha values were excellent, indicating that the data is reliable for use in this study. These results support Bryan & Bell's (2007) requirement of questionnaire validity by checking

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content validity, also known as face validity, which refers to the extent that the measure content of the concept in question.

Table 12 summarizes the hypotheses and their results. The study found a significant relationship between product quality and brand leadership, leading to the acceptance of Ho1. Additionally, there is a significant relationship between service quality and brand leadership, supporting the acceptance of Ho2.

Aaker (1991) states that quality is a crucial aspect to consider for a brand's success. Therefore, product or service quality is vital for any brand to gain a sustainable competitive advantage. The study aims to fill the research gap by examining the relationships between product quality, service quality, and brand leadership in the fast-food industry. The findings validate the positive correlation between product quality, service quality, and brand leadership, which is consistent with Hanasya et al.'s (2013) study.

5.3 Limitations of the Research

In spite of all the proposed hypothesis were supported, this study was limited to Malaysian and Non-Malaysian consumers that based in Malaysia only. Even though the fast food restaurants stated in questionnaire covered the most fast food brands, not all fast food restaurants were examined. As a result, the respondents who participated in this study may not be representative as the consumers nationwide.

On the other hand, this research was found to examine only the quality factor of brand leadership despite other factors that may represent the key success of the fast food restaurants or fast food brand such as awareness, loyalty and price.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Although this study had some limitations, there are recommendations for future researchers to conduct similar studies in other sectors with wider coverage. It is important to note that this study only focused on fast food consumers in Malaysia. Therefore, future research should include samples from other countries, particularly in Southeast Asia (SEA). Conducting studies in different geographic locations is necessary to capture the impact of different cultures and levels of economic development between two or more countries. This will provide more benefits and a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

Moreover, another area of future research would be to investigate other qualitative techniques to gain better insights and respondents on the factors essential in creating a brand leadership strategy, aside from product quality and service quality. This would enable a better understanding of the various factors that contribute to brand leadership, which would be invaluable for businesses and fast food restaurant management to improve their growth and profitability.

5.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of this study demonstrate that product quality and service quality have an influence on brand leadership. There is also a positive relationship between product quality, service quality, and brand leadership. This research is important for businesses and fast food restaurant management to improve the growth of their businesses in terms of functionality and profits. It also helps to keep existing customers coming back to the restaurant. Furthermore, it enables businesses to better understand the needs and preferences of their consumers, which is essential for enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty. Overall, this study has important implications for businesses in the fast food industry and beyond, as it highlights the crucial role that product quality and service quality play in building brand leadership.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Valued Respondents,

I am a postgraduate student named Jeremy Kabinchong pursuing my Master of Business Administration at Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (UNIRAZAK). I would like to invite you to participate in my research by filling out a questionnaire survey. The research is titled 'The Impact and Relationship between Perceived Service and Product Quality to Brand Leadership for Fast-Food Restaurants in the QSR Industry'. The objective is to demonstrate the positive correlation between product quality, service quality, and brand leadership. The questionnaire will only take approximately 5 minutes to complete, and your sincere opinion is highly appreciated. Your participation is crucial for the success of this study. Rest assured that all data collected will remain confidential and will only be used for academic purposes. If you need more information, feel free to contact me at jeremy@ur.unirazak.edu.my. Thank you for your time and willingness to take part in this survey.

Best regards,
Jeremy Kabinchong

QUESTIONNAIRE

Instruction: Please tick (√) your answer.

	I have read and understand the information given to me here and I voluntarily agree to participate in this research.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

1. Gender

	Male
	Female

2. Age:

	Below 21 years
	21 - 30 years old
	31 - 40 years old
	41 - 50 years old
	51 – 60 years old
	Above 60 years old

3. Ethnicity Group:

	Malay
	Chinese
	Indian / *India*
	Others

4. Marial Status:

	Single
	Married
	Divorces
	Widowed

5. Gross Monthly Household Income:

	Less than RM 2,000
	Between RM 2,001 – RM 4,000
	Between RM 4,001 – RM 6,000
	Between RM 6,001 – RM 8,000
	Between RM 8,001 – RM 10,000
	More than RM 10,001

6. Educational level:

	Secondary School
	Diploma
	Bachelor Degree

	Master Degree
	Doctoral Degree
	Other Professional Qualification
	Others

7. Occupation:

	Student
	Self Employed
	Unemployed
	Government Sector
	Private Sector
	Retired
	Others

8. Nationality:

	Malaysian
	Non-Malaysian

SECTION B: PURCHASING PROFILE

1. Do you consume fast food?

	Yes
	No

2. How often do you consume fast food on a monthly basis?

	1 – 2 times
	3 – 4 times
	5 – 6 times
	7 times or more
	N/A

3. Please select ONE fast-food brand that you frequent the most often.

	A&W
	Burger King
	Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC)
	Marry Brown
	McDonald's
	Texas Chicken
	N/A

SECTION C: PRODUCT QUALITY, SERVICE QUALITY AND BRAND LEADERSHIP

Instruction: Please tick (√) your answers according to the scale below.

1	Strongly Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Neutral
4	Agree
5	Strongly Agree

These are statements about a fast-food brand:					
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Food quality is good.					
2. Menu has good variety of items.					
3. Food is a good value for the money.					
4. Food is flavorful and tasty.					
5. Food is served hot.					
6. Nutritional value displayed by fast-food brand is important to me.					

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	I opted for this fast-food brand due to their quick service.					
2.	I chose this fast-food brand because their payment method is convenient					
3.	Using a specific credit card or e-wallet with this brand gives me added value such as rebates or discounts.					
4.	My interactions with the workers at this fast-food brand are of good quality.					
5.	This fast-food brand has a fair system for handling complaints.					
6.	The environment in fast-food restaurants has a positive influence on my purchasing decisions.					

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	This fast-food brand is one of the leading brands in its category.					
2.	Advertisement influences my purchasing decisions.					
3.	The fast-food brand is growing in popularity.					
4.	The brand lead with the advance in the product.					
5.	The brand lead with the advance in services.					
6.	I am loyal to one fast-food brand because of its reputation.					

Source: as adapted from Garvin, (1998) and Hanaysha & Ghani, (2013).

End of Questionnaire

APPENDIX B: APPROVAL PAGE

TITLE OF PROJECT PAPER: THE IMPACT AND RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED SERVICE AND PRODUCT QUALITY TO BRAND LEADERSHIP FOR FAST-FOOD RESTAURANTS IN THE QSR INDUSTRY

NAME OF AUTHOR: JEREMY KABINCHONG

The undersigned is pleased to certify that the above candidates have fulfilled the condition of the project paper prepared in the partial fulfilment for the awards of the degree of Master of Business Administration.

SUPERVISOR

Signature : _____

Name :

Date :

ENDORSED BY

_____

Dean

Graduate School of Business

Date: