



Institute of Technology Management and Entrepreneurship

**BUILDING BRAND REPUTATION OF THE FAST FOOD INDUSTRY
THROUGH CUSTOMER'S SATISFACTION IN THE UNITED ARAB
EMIRATES**

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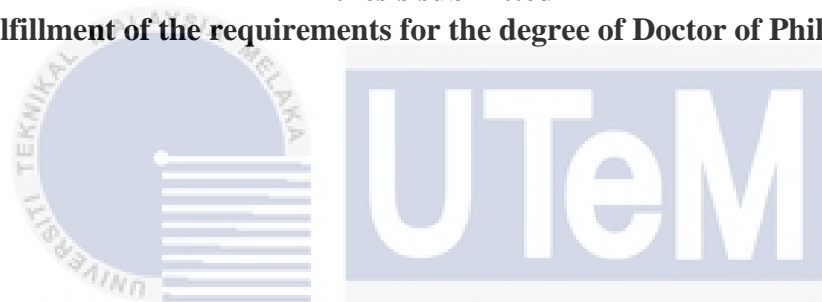
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**BUILDING BRAND REPUTATION OF THE FAST FOOD INDUSTRY
THROUGH CUSTOMER'S SATISFACTION IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

MOHAMMED RASHED ABDULLA ZUHAIR ALKAABI

**A thesis submitted
in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**



Institute of Technology Management and Entrepreneurship

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2023

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis entitled “Building Brand Reputation of The Fast Food Industry Through Customer’s Satisfaction in The United Arab Emirates” is the result of my own research except as cited in the references. The thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree.

Signature



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APPROVAL

I hereby declare that I have read this thesis and in my opinion, this thesis is sufficient in terms of scope and quality for the award of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Date : 21/12/2022



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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the inspiring person towards my life... my dear father and my dear mother whose always want me to have the best, for her love, the prayers that she made for me.

...To my love...

My wife is a wonderful wife, a great companion and so much more in my life. She is always a source of love, courage and strength at every tough instant throughout these years.

...To my great guide...

My dear supervisor, Dr. Nurul Zarirah Nizam.

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ABSTRACT

Making brand reputation is becoming an important element to gain long-term profitability and competitive advantage. This study has chosen the Abu Dhabi fast food restaurants as the target industry to investigate and a few variables were chosen which are price, service quality, food quality, physical environment and analyzed the factors of customer satisfaction of Abu Dhabi in McDonald's fast food industry. Customer satisfaction can be described as the feelings of happiness, pleasure, relief, acceptance, and delight. Thus, it is necessary to analyze how the four dimensions can affect customer satisfaction in the fast food industry. In marketing, brand reputation is defined as a consumer's commitment to repeat purchase, it also endorses the trust towards the brand and it also shows the quality and performance of products. The McDonald's fast food industry is being adopted to UAE food requirements and is a growing phenomenon in UAE, and it is significant for McDonald's fast food restaurants' owner to clearly understand which dimensions enable to stand out among other competitors and increase customer satisfaction and brand reputation. The main objective of this research is to investigate the factors influencing customer satisfaction and brand reputation of McDonald's restaurants in the United Arab Emirates (Abu Dhabi). Data for this study were collected from a sample of 421 respondents who have visited the McDonald's fast food restaurant in Abu Dhabi and had the dining experience in McDonald's fast food restaurant. The collected data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22.0 and Partial Least Squares (PLSSEM) with SmartPLS version 3. The multicollinearity test is one of the preliminary analysis, and this test is used in the study to ensure that all the items of the independent variable and the mediator variable are correlated to each other. The variance inflation factors (VIF) is used to measure the multicollinearity. The findings illustrated that service quality and physical environment factors have a positive influence on customer satisfaction while price and food quality do not have a significant impact. Hence, it is recommended to the fast food managers especially McDonald's restaurants to appropriately follow specific tactics to improve those components and customer satisfaction and brand reputation.

MEMBANGUNKAN REPUTASI JENAMA INDUSTRI MAKANAN SEGERA MELALUI KEPUASAN PELAGGAN DI EMIRIAH ARAB BERSATU

ABSTRAK

Membangunkan reputasi jenama menjadi elemen penting untuk memperoleh keuntungan jangka panjang dan kelebihan daya saing. Kajian ini telah memilih restoran makanan segera Abu Dhabi sebagai sasaran industri untuk disiasat dan beberapa pembolehubah telah dipilih iaitu harga, kualiti perkhidmatan, kualiti makanan, persekitaran fizikal dan menganalisis faktor-faktor kepuasan pelanggan Abu Dhabi dalam makanan segera McDonald's. industri. Kepuasan pelanggan boleh dihuraikan sebagai perasaan gembira, seronok, lega, penerimaan, dan kegembiraan. Oleh itu, adalah perlu untuk menganalisis bagaimana empat dimensi boleh mempengaruhi kepuasan pelanggan dalam industri makanan segera. Dalam pemasaran, reputasi jenama ditakrifkan sebagai komitmen pengguna untuk mengulangi pembelian, ia juga menyokong kepercayaan terhadap jenama dan ia juga menunjukkan kualiti dan prestasi produk. Industri makanan segera McDonald's diterima pakai mengikut keperluan makanan UAE dan merupakan fenomena yang semakin berkembang di UAE, dan adalah penting bagi pemilik restoran makanan segera McDonald untuk memahami dengan jelas dimensi mana yang membolehkan untuk menonjol di kalangan pesaing lain dan meningkatkan kepuasan pelanggan dan reputasi jenama. . Objektif utama penyelidikan ini adalah untuk menyiasat faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi kepuasan pelanggan dan reputasi jenama restoran McDonald's di Emiriah Arab Bersatu (Abu Dhabi). Data untuk kajian ini dikumpul daripada sampel 421 responden yang pernah mengunjungi restoran makanan segera McDonald's di Abu Dhabi dan mempunyai pengalaman makan di restoran makanan segera McDon-ald. Data yang dikumpul dianalisis menggunakan Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) versi 22.0 dan Partial Least Squares (PLSSEM) dengan SmartPLS versi 3. Ujian multikolineariti merupakan salah satu analisis awal, dan ujian ini digunakan dalam kajian untuk memastikan semua item pembolehubah tidak bersandar dan pembolehubah pengantara adalah berkorelasi antara satu sama lain. Faktor inflasi varians (VIF) digunakan untuk mengukur multikolineariti. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa kualiti perkhidmatan dan faktor persekitaran fizikal mempunyai pengaruh positif terhadap kepuasan pelanggan manakala harga dan kualiti makanan tidak memberi kesan yang ketara. Oleh itu, adalah disyorkan kepada pengurus makanan segera terutamanya restoran McDonald's untuk mengikut taktik tertentu dengan sewajarnya untuk meningkatkan komponen tersebut dan kepuasan pelanggan serta reputasi jenama.

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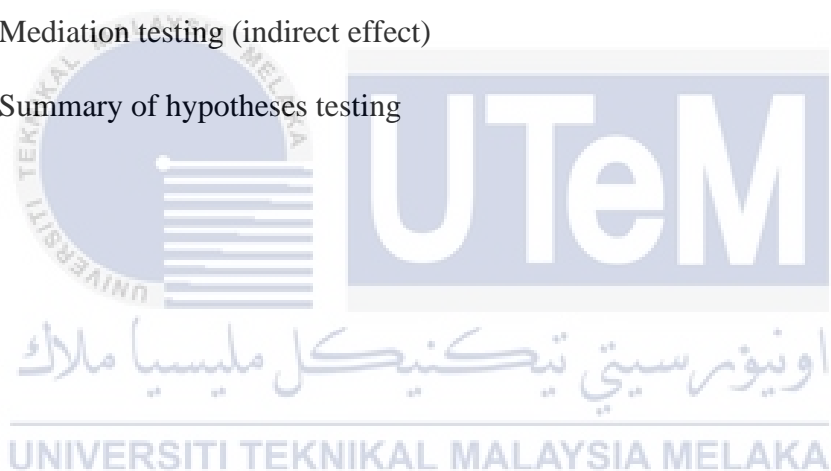
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A	-	Aesthetics
AEV	-	Average extracted variance
CB-SEM	-	Covariance-Based Structural Equation Modelling
CFA	-	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
VIF	-	Variance inflation factors
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
GoF	-	Goodness of Fit
R	-	Reliability
SDG	-	Sustainable development goals
SEM	-	Structural Equation Modelling
SPSS	-	Statistical Package for the Social Science
SC	-	Customer satisfaction
P	-	Product
UAE	-	United Arab Emirates
S	-	Service
E	-	Environment
BL	-	Brand reputation
VIF	-	Variance Inflation Factor

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Journal with Impact Factor

AlKaabi, M.R and Nizam, N.Z., 2021. Customer service quality assessment and customers' satisfaction in food and beverage in McDonald's restaurant in United Arab Emirates. (Scopus indexed, under process).

AlKaabi, M.R and Nizam, N.Z., 2021. Customers' satisfaction in food and beverage in McDonald's restaurant in United Arab Emirates: A review. (Scopus indexed, under process).



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The first section in this chapter includes a background to the study and a short introduction of factors that affect customers' satisfaction and brand reputation in food and beverages in McDonald's restaurant in United Arab Emirates. Then, the problem statement of this study, research questions and priorities concentrating on the problem statement are introduced. This chapter also discusses the significance, scopes and limitations of the study. Finally, the research structure is described.

1.2 Background

The United Arab Emirates is an Arabian country situated at the Western Asia on the Arabian Gulf. The UAE borders Saudi Arabia to the south and Oman to the east, and shares maritime borders with Iran to the north and Qatar to the west (Kerr et al., 2017). The UAE population touched 9.2 million in 2013. The Emirati citizens population forms 1.4 million, while foreigners form 7.8 million. the UAE has recently undergone notable economical, cultural, social and everyday human life changes, especially in the food and beverage industries, which have increased fast in terms of local and foreign investment forms (Arif et al., 2013; Brien et al., 2019) And the word “restaurant company” has become more familiar and widely utilized nowadays, with several search outcomes for this main phrase, equa. For its popularity, the fast-food sector has gathered full of desirable conditions because it is considered as

“food-drink-accommodation-travel” with four basic human needs (Ahmad et al., 2019). The retention major goal is to keep consumers interested and involved with a product or service (Nasir et al., 2018).

This makes customers feel very necessary and regularly interacted, satisfied and more likely to revisit (Al-Tit., 2019). There are still many international food industry franchise brands such as McDonalds (Miele et al., 2018) because they are not impacted by the rise or decline of the internal economy. In addition, other international franchisors like Pizza Hut, Burger King, Subway, Auntie Annes Pretzel and Baskin Robbin are constantly growing their networks in the UAE.

As favored by the rapid growth of the high-income population in the UAE region and food preparation time constraints, the service industry of food and beverage in the UAE has added to its success. During weekdays or even public holidays and weekends, consumers continued to eat outside rather than eating at home because of urban areas hectic schedules and income rises in most of citizen households in the UAE (Mustafa et al., 2018). While customers with middle-to high-income somewhat impacted by goods and services introduction, they never border and still prefer dining out to enjoy good food as well as good atmosphere where they can relax and relieve tension in their everyday lives.

There is a high level of competition between fine dining restaurants and other food service categories in the food service industry. To gain loyal customers and repeat purchases, customer satisfaction should be the vital goal for achieving business success (Nguyen et al., 2018). According to Wilson's investigation (2018), quality of food is one of customer satisfaction important predictors rather than physical environment and service quality, while repeated aim demonstrates only 17 percent. This is due to that food becomes one of the key

aspects of the restaurant experience, and it is clear that it has key effects on customer satisfaction and patronage of return (Wilson, 2018). Thus, the industry of restaurants nowadays has serious issues in reaching a good quality of food that not only captivates customers but can also be greater for business competitors. Customer satisfaction is one of the business goals that should be critically performed in order to create repeat customers (Han et al., 2019).

A restaurant's atmosphere will establish customers expectations as an outcome of the dining experience before the last served meal of fast food. The present study's intangible aspects, regarding a restaurant's surrounding in particular are further strengthened by the quality of food and service. Nowadays, customers are more interested in enhancing the quality of their lives and having a comfortable dining room rather than the food offered (Ma et al., 2018).

It is necessary to obtain the profitability for a long-term for the purpose of getting and sustaining loyal customers. Brand reputation is a customer's repurchase that shows their conscious decision to unceasingly buy and express a positive attitudes towards brand to buy those products in future. It is not only about repeating purchases but a psychological connection to the customer in relation to the brand (Tabish et al., 2017). Singh (2016) stated that brand reputation is nothing but providing satisfaction to a consumer that satisfaction originates from trust and on a specific brand while other brands and services are offered (Li and Chaipoopirutana, 2016; Singh, 2016).

The competitive environment makes organizations work for maintaining a good relationship with customers to gain the reputation of customers beside selling their products and services (Tabish et al., 2017). Brand reputation, according to Ramiz et al. (2016), is a behavioral and attitude function. The action of repurchase, without these aspects considered,

is insufficient indicator of brand reputation. A key factor that marketers raise that brand reputation assists in reducing doing business cost, thus enhancing brand and the profitability of a company (Li and Chaipoopirutana, 2016).

Loyal customers of a brand turn to be the people promoting a product (Li and Chaipoopirutana, 2016; Tabish et al., 2017). The customer commitment was considered by Ehsani and Ehsani (2015) as an organizational valuable advantage. Reputation is obtained through the superior customer experience delivery (Ramiz et al., 2016).

Brand reputation, according to Ramiz et al. (2016), is a mental state in which consumers are willing to accept paying more for a brand. Brand reputation, in marketing, comprises the commitment of a consumer to purchase a brand again. It indicates the trust towards a brand and refers to the product's quality and performance as well (Ehsani and Ehsani, 2015). Managers think that the want to obtain the branded products is significant to a definite groups of people (Ehsani and Ehsani, 2015 ; Tabish et al., 2017). To satisfy the expectations of McDonald's in UAE, all McDonald's around the world, specifically McDonald's in UAE restaurants need to train their personnel so they realize the particular procedures and policies of McDonald's, involving (service quality, food quality and environment) to improve brand reputation.

1.3 Problem statement

Global brands like Mcdonal's predominantly encounter issues with respect to cultural, political, technological, economical, legal and environmental factors prevailing in the respective foreign markets (Ankur, 2019). These macro factors are complex and vary greatly across developed and emerging market settings. Extended to this issues, global companies reach out to foreign markets to reap strategic benefits accruing from demand and supply,

consumer demand and strategic appeal from consistent positioning for their offerings. Emerging markets are a source of increased profits as much of their growth will come from these markets only. For McDonald's, franchisee internal control issues coupled with negative associations about their food quality and accompanying health hazards led to depletion of consumer trust. Salient features about a brand go to build its special identity that consumers connect with, and establishes a unique selling proposition for the brand. Such positioning evokes a particular set of cognitive and emotional responses from consumers that are linked with their perception of and attitude to the brand.

With globalization, numerous brands are attempting to obtain new customers and keep them (Li and Chaipoopirutana, 2016). Food has substantial effects on both the satisfaction of customers and their reputation. The majority of the previous research, irrespective to the food quality importance, concentrated on other features influencing restaurants satisfaction like physical environments and service quality. According to Chand et al. (2018), while, food is one of the main characteristics in the restaurant that explains dining satisfaction and predicts repeat customers. Sadly, the quality of the food was not one of main interests of their study. However, in previous studies (Chand et al, 2018), there is no clear data to confirm the effect of food quality in restaurants. Regarding this, each attribute of individual food quality contribution to the satisfaction of customers has been given a little attention. The study's attempt to provide information focuses on the qualities of food quality to help business operations become more effective. More precisely, this research might bridge the gap by investigating the degree to which the attributes of food quality can affect customer satisfaction dining experience in the fine dining restaurants in the sense of UAE dining.

With the growing importance of food and drink safety and healthy, a growing interest in food safety management in food production, trade and service businesses can be noticed

(Randeree, 2019). There has been a growing trend in eating outside the home in the UAE for several years. Consumers currently have a catering service not only to meet their basic nutritional needs, but also a wider range of services offered and a growing customer group (Butti et al., 2018). A good example of this are gas stations where there are bistro bars. Catering companies, including bistros at gas stations, will take customer needs and expectations into account as well as integrate a quality assurance mechanism into the company's plan to be competitive on the market. Proper worth is a guarantee of daily clients' capacity to extend and profit (Fathelrahman et al., 2018).

Quality of service and satisfaction of customers have become an area of utmost importance for professionals, managers and scientists in today's globalized world because of its connection to customer satisfaction and retention, cost, profitability, and favorable word of mouth (Salindal et al., 2018). As expressed by Randeree al. (2010), service quality has been identified as one of the main variables for the survival of the food industry and one of the driving forces for an organization's achievement, service quality is a contrast between customer expectations of how a company or industry will perform and customer perceived product outcomes (Ahmad et al., 2019).

In the fast food industry, price is a critical factor (Dastane and Fazlin, 2017). Value, which is identified as price + quality, is determined by customer perception. As a result, quality products must be offered at a price that is consistent with the product offering in order for customers to perceive a product's worth (Kim et al., 2006). Price is a standard aspect of every marketing plan because of its relevance in influencing client behaviour. (David et al., 2014). Moreover, price and quality value combination -has continuously been a crucial motivator of firms operating in the fast-food sector (Dastane and Fazlin, 2017). Thus, value, or price fairness is a predictor of a buyer's expectations and it has in effect on the