

## **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BRAND PERSONALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN LOCAL PREMIUM COFFEE SHOP**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Many studies have focuses on customer satisfaction at restaurant. However very few studies that focuses on coffee shop in Malaysia. Moreover, study on relationship between brand personality and customer satisfaction in Local Premium coffee shop in Malaysia is considering limited. Therefore, this present study aims (1) to examine the relationship between brand personality and customer satisfaction and (2) to determine which brand personality attribution that highly influence customers' satisfaction. A quantitative study was conducted and a set of questionnaire was developed. The data was collected through surveyed and completed by 400 respondents who had experiences dined-in at the Local Premium Coffee Shops in Klang Valley, Selangor Malaysia. The findings revealed that brand personality correlate with customers' satisfaction and ruggedness attribute is the most influence to customer satisfaction. This implies that the owners and managers need to enhance their brand personality thru sincerity, competence, sophistication and ruggedness to improve customers' satisfaction.

**KEYWORDS:** Brand personality; customer satisfaction; local premium coffee shop.

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The culture of coffee drinking has increased from year to year and became focus to world coffee industry. According to the International Coffee Organization (2014), the consumption has increased over the last 50 years at the annual growth rate of 1.9% whereby in the year of 1964, the consumption was 57.9 million bags and in 2012, the consumption had increased to 142 million bags. It shows that the increasing of coffee consumption is important for the marketers in making a decision in their business. In addition, the International Coffee Organization (2014) stated that the consumption of hot drink in Asia has been dominated by tea compared to coffee. However, in the recent years, there is an increased number of consumption in the Asian countries. The dynamic growth of coffee consumption in Asia compared to South America, Africa, Central America, North America and Europe whereby

an average rate is 4% per annum and it was increasing dramatically to 4.9% since the year of 2000 (International Coffee Organization, 2014). Moreover, from year 1990 the consumption of coffee bags is 48,000 and has rapidly increased to 393,000 bags in the year of 2012, Malaysia being one of the country that has contributed to the increasing rate of coffee consumption in South East Asia.

In this light, Pongsiri (2013), stated that cafe, coffee house, coffee shop and any related form of establishment which primarily served coffee or any other drinks became a symbol of an informal club that provides a meeting place for customer to congregate, read, write, talk and entertain one another. The pleasant atmosphere of a coffee shop provides the facilities for people to interact with fellow community members can also grade the coffee shop as third place between home and office (Euromonitor, 2013). According to Goi (2013), the coffee drinking culture has been present in Malaysia for many years especially the culture of drinking local coffee every day, while the culture of drinking western trend coffee exist due to the influence of foreign residents that who reside and work in Malaysia in 2012. Wong (2014), stated that the inspiration of coffee shops and cafes in Malaysia has taken over from the vibrant cafe cultures from the cities like Seattle in the United States and Melbourne, Australia. Furthermore, Wong mentioned that most of these establishments located in the area of Petaling Jaya, Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur served a quality coffee and tea, bakery products, tantalising all-day brunch fare, as well as sinfully dessert. Hence, the marketer must consider in making a right decision in managing the establishment in order to compete with the competitors.

In this light, branding is one of the way where the customer's communicating their experiences (Valette-Florence & De Barnier, 2013). Arora and Stoner (2009) mentioning that customers who are purchase on certain products or services usually influenced by their emotional and symbolic of the brand that represent and reflect their personality. Hence, most of the organizations realized that brand is very important element to the customers and as a tool for them to attract customer to be loyal to the organization. Therefore, it is very crucial to the organization to develop a brand that can bring a meaningful personality and attitudes for customers. Previously, a lot of studies that related to customer satisfaction was conducted. However, very few studies that measure the relationship between brand personality and customer satisfaction (Roustasekehravani *et al.*, 2014). Moreover, as suggested by Roustasekehravani *et al.* (2014), the future studies should be conducted in difference setting. Hence, the objective of this study is (1) to examine the relationship between brand personality and customer satisfaction and (2) to identify the best brand personality attribution that mostly influence customer satisfaction in the local premium coffee shop in Klang Valley, Selangor Malaysia. As a result, this study is crucial to help the organization to achieve its objectives in term of efficiency, loyalty, profitability and satisfaction. Furthermore, this study also helps the owner to increase the restaurant patronage by fulfilling customer satisfaction and used as guideline for the owner and researchers to enhance customer satisfaction in the future.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Local Premium Coffee Shop

In the early 1900s the British colonization has established the local coffee shop in Malaysia where the traditional Malaysians coffee was served with the budget meals that is suited with the taste of local people and this is the meeting place for the community to socialize and meets each other (Choong et al., 2013). In addition, the local coffee shop in comes from the Hokkien Chinese word that is “Kopitiam”–“tiam/shop”, “kopi/coffee” in other word “kopitiam” is “kedai kopi” or coffee shop run by Hainanese or Chinese immigrants that emerged since the pre-World War II. Therefore, this Kopitiam can only be described as local/traditional coffee shop that served traditional coffee and Malaysian delicacies. Hence, premium coffee shop can be defined as “a coffeehouse that aims to serve as a hi-end premium coffee and other related products to the customers” (Pongsiri, 2013). On top of that, the products of premium coffee shop referring as gourmet coffee with latte art, tea, Frappuccino, bakery items and snacks with the interesting surrounding area of the establishment for entertainment and lifestyle. Therefore, many countries such as India, Malaysia, China, Singapore, Thailand and Philippines has started the coffee house establishments in accommodating the needs of business people as well as the teenagers for a meeting and a place to meet up (Pongsiri, 2013).

Furthermore, the coffee shop outlet with several kinds of brand mushroomed in towns and cities over the last few years in Malaysia (Lee, 2014). The traditionally coffee was consumed at home but the growing of coffee outlets has increased the out-of-home consumption (Lee, 2014). Consequently, a rapid growth of coffee shop in the cities due to Malaysian prefer to drink coffee outside from their home with friends, business partner and to enjoy a leisure environment. Thus, the increasing number of customer especially the young one and business user create a demand for fashionable outlets, different flavours and good presentation of coffee shop (Lee, 2014). Caroline (2014) stated that modern coffee shops have been flourishing and has created a large competition to win the demand of customer. Moreover, this kind of coffee shop can be found everywhere in commercial centres, shopping malls and convenient stores that providing facilities such as air-conditioned and WiFi (Choong, Hafiz, & Yew, 2013). However, they are trying harder to stand out with the competitors (Caroline, 2014). In addition, the speciality coffee companies need to look at the differentiation of the establishment compare to the other competitors and to ascertain their brand by satisfying the needs of the customers (Bookman, 2013). Moreover, a good brand will reduce the marketing selling time, speeding buying process, protect the brand against competitions, reducing promotion cost and increase sales volume (Valette-Florence & De Barnier, 2013). Therefore, it is very challenging and crucial for the local premium coffee shop to strengthen their brand and to differentiate from the competitors. Hence, study about customer satisfaction on brand personality is important to help the local premium coffee shop to stand out and sustain longer in the market.

### 2.2 Brand Personality

Brand personality is defined as *“the set of human characteristics associated with a brand”* (Aaker, 1997) while Freling, Crosno, and Henard (2011) have defined brand personality as

an ability of the brand through the combination of human characteristics that associated with the brand itself. Hence, brand should bring a value and sense of high quality of premium product that offered at affordable price to the customers (Liang & Rou-An, 2012). According to Sheena (2012), the interest of the consumers awaked by the brand because of the personalities that each and every one of them hold. Moreover, the characteristics of a brand are varying in shape, texture, size, and many other distinctive features that are based on the choice of consumer (Sheena, 2012). Hence, consumer will appear in different way and different situations because a brand has a distinct personality itself. Lin (2010) stated that there are three sources of brand personality; (1) the consumer association towards brand, (2) the company's image in creating advertising to attract the customer and (3) the attributes of the product. Therefore, the brand personality itself shows that how attractiveness of the brand can initially persuade an individual to react or purchase the brand based on his/her individual personality. It also responses on different emotional desire in consumers and the purchasing on brand are influenced by their opinions (De Moya & Jain, 2013). Brand also can be segmented into two: individual/group that use/consume the brand (user) and those who does not use the brand (non-user) (Romaniuk, 2008). In consumer choice of a brand, personality is a useful variables and customer will choose the brand that is related with their own personalities perhaps the brand will express and demonstrate our own personality (Lin, 2010). Therefore, a successful brand will develop a positive brand image in order to hold a positive relationship with customers. People will love brands because of their experiences in getting personalized service delivery and quality of the product are good and dependable (Muller, 1996).

Furthermore, most of the international restaurant executive has concerned and focused on engaging brand personality, and most of them started by applying the theories and practices of brand personality in developing a restaurant (Muller, 1996). In addition, most of the researchers also have suggested that managers need to understand the appeal of brand's personality which can influenced customers' satisfaction in terms of potency, endurance, and the relevance of brand personality. Therefore, Aaker (1997) identified five distinct brand personality dimensions that should be included in order to satisfy customers are sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness. It is also crucial for the managers to deeply understand the power of brand personality which can influence good relationship between organization and customers in a long term.

### **2.3 Customer satisfaction**

Customer satisfaction is determinant of post-purchase attitude that reflects a positive or negative outcome which derived from the customers' itself. Hence, customer satisfaction is very important element that can sustain a long-term relationship between customers and the organization in the marketing strategies (Siu, Zhang, & Yau, 2013). Organizations who are fail in providing good services facing big challenges to retain customer, consequently encounter unsatisfied customer. Therefore, staffs or front-liners play important factors that affect customers' satisfaction, if they do not perform very well, the customer will turned off from the restaurant (Jacob, Guéguen, & Boulbry, 2014). Hence, as the food service industry,

a high level of personal contact between employees and customer lead to the customer satisfaction (Jung & Yoon, 2013).

In this light, the dining experience attributes are also influenced customer satisfaction such as food quality, physical environment, and service quality. According to Rust (1993) customer satisfaction's value rest on its relationship towards the choice and market share. Loyalty and switching intent of the customer to the organization is very important to determine the satisfaction level of the customer but thing still switch on even though the satisfaction is increasing (Jung & Yoon, 2012). They also agreed that the customer involvement in purchase decision by making a choice of products and services would also be different from the past, perhaps a consistently behaviour will exactly cause them toward the satisfaction, switching intent and loyalty. Lee, Jeonghoon and Lee (2013) reported that first, customer loyalty has a positive impact to the profitability of a firm; second, on repurchase behaviour of customer he found out that it is very risky to determine the volume of a purchase to determine the repurchase intention and third, word of mouth will be influenced by the customer based on their experience in using a product or services. Therefore, it is important for the practitioners to make sure that the customer be satisfied with the products and services that has been used by them to ensure the successfulness of the company.

## **2.4 Research hypotheses**

Based on the literature above, six hypotheses were formulated:

- H1: There is a positive relationship between sincerity and customer satisfaction.
- H2: There is a positive relationship between excitement and customer satisfaction.
- H3: There is a positive relationship between competence and customer satisfaction.
- H4: There is a positive relationship between sophistication and customer satisfaction.
- H5: There is a positive relationship between ruggedness and customer satisfaction.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

A conclusive research design is employed to test specific hypotheses and examine the relationships between the variables. Single cross-sectional design was used, where one sample respondent and information was obtained from this sample. Thus, this study focuses on the individual satisfaction about local premium coffee shop based on their brand personality that consists of sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness in Klang Valley, Malaysia. The questionnaire was adapted from a single author to measure variables. For the brand personality, the questionnaire adapted from Tran, Dauchez, and Szemik (2013) while customer satisfaction from Canny (2014). A seven-point Likert scale was employed from the range of 1 for completely disagreed to 7 completely agreed. In addition, this empirical study was conducted at Klang Valley's local premium coffee shops. After the questionnaire was done and the permission was granted from the coffee shop owners, the researcher started distributing the questionnaires. The researcher approached customers after they were seated in the shops or as they were scanning/perusing the menu. The researcher explained the aim of the study to these customers and requested

them to participate. It was emphasized that the researcher would treat the information provided as confidential and anonymous. This was back up by the cover letter attached to the questionnaire. Customers who were willing to participate in this study were given questionnaires to fill in after their meal experience because satisfaction can be better expressed immediately after a meal is consumed. Completed questionnaires were then collected, checked and discussed with the respondents in case of any queries. The respondents were given a pen as a token of appreciation and gratitude.

#### **4. DATA ANALYSIS**

##### **4.1 Subject Demographic**

The respond rate of collecting data from the respondent is 100% which means that the researcher successfully completely distributed 400 questionnaires to the respondents. Therefore, the result of this study is based on the 400 questionnaires received. Based on the results, 39.8% of the respondents were male, and the remaining 60.23% of the respondents were female. The majority age group involved in this study were 55.3% (30-40 years old), followed by 19.0% aged between 21-30 years old, 17.3% (41-50 years old), 5.3% (less than 20 years old and below), and lastly 3.3% was made up of respondents aged between 51 years old and above. In terms of respondents' income mostly the highest was between RM4001-5000 with 29.5%, followed by 17.8% between RM3001-4000 and the lowest was between RM1001-2000 with 7.3%.

##### **4.2 Reliability**

Commonly accepted measure of testing the reliability is through measuring the value of Cronbach's Alpha (Cronbach, 1990), which can be calculated by using SPSS. A pilot study was conducted to test the validity and reliability of the instrument. According to Babbie and Mouton, (2001) it is essential to pre-test subjects comprise people to whom the questionnaire is at least appropriate to ensure content validity of the questionnaire. The result of the pilot study is as below:

**Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha for pilot study**

Variables	No of items	Cronbach alpha
Sincerity	11	.953
Excitement	11	.958
Competence	9	.953
Sophistication	6	.943
Ruggedness	4	.903
Customer Satisfaction	3	.895

##### **4.3 Multiple Linear Regressions**

In order to answer all the research questions, objectives and hypotheses, a multiple regression analysis was used. Based on Pallant (2011), multiple regression is not just one technique but a family of techniques that can be used to explore the relationship between one continuous dependent variables and a number of independent variables or predictors. Table 3 shows all



the independent variables had relationship with customer satisfaction. The beta value under standardized coefficients was evaluated in order to compare the independent variables to the dependent variables. Based on the Table 3, the highest standardized beta coefficient was the ruggedness ( $\beta = .444$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), followed by competence ( $\beta = .260$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) then, sophistication ( $\beta = .202$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and lastly sincerity ( $\beta = .107$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). However, the excitement had the lowest influence on customers' satisfaction in the local premium coffee shop with the standardized beta coefficient ( $\beta = -.078$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Overall, this study found that five independent variables which are sincerity, excitement, competent, sophistication and ruggedness had a positive and significant relationship with customers' satisfaction. In addition, the model was significant [ $F(3,407) = 239$ ,  $p < .001$ ], with the predictors explaining 76% of the customers' satisfaction in the local premium coffee shop. Five predictors were entered into the model, and all of them made statistically significant contributions to customers' satisfaction. In terms of importance, ruggedness made the largest unique contribution to the model.

**Table 3: Multiple Linear Regressions**

	B	SE B	B
Constant	.717	.130	
Sincerity	.098	.044	.107*
Excitement	-.075	.061	-.078
Competence	.239	.060	.260*
Sophistication	.180	.048	.202*
Ruggedness	.429	.046	.444*

(Note:  $R^2 = .76$ , \* $p < .001$ )

## 5. DISCUSSION

The analysis from Multiple Linear Regressions indicates that there is significant and positive relationship between brand personality and customer satisfaction. This result is in line with the study of Lada and Sidin (2012) where the brand personality is the predictor of customer satisfaction. In addition, result also shows that brand personality attribution; sincerity, competent, sophistication and ruggedness have significant and positive relationship with customer satisfaction which in line as well with Lada and Sidin (2012). Thus, supporting Hypothesis 1, 3, 4, and 5. As stated by Lada and Sidin (2012) these attributions is the important element to customer satisfaction. However, the study fail to support Hypothesis 2 that shows local premium coffee shop customer not accept excitement as the element that contribute to their brand personality. This probably because customer doesn't feel the concept that introduced by the local premium coffee shop as daring, trendy, spirited, cool, up-to-date and contemporary.

## 6. CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, this study found that brand personality is significant predictor of customer satisfaction in the context of local premium coffee shop customers in Klang Valley, Selangor Malaysia. Moreover, the study also found that sincerity, competent, sophistication and

ruggedness are the attribution that have positive and significant relationship with customer satisfaction. This means that local premium coffee shop owner and manager should sustain the current way they perform sincerity, competent, sophistication and ruggedness to the customer. But they are also encouraged to enhance these four elements to improve their customer satisfaction in the future.

A cross sectional study has been conducted at one time basis through this study. This leads to the limitation of time and area of the study to be covered at a short period of time. Hence, the future study can be conducted in a longitudinal basis in order to measure the result of customer satisfaction, more precisely through-out a certain period of time. The same goes to the area of the study, a longitudinal approach will help the researcher to cover a few places other than Klang Valley.

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