

## Factors Influencing Consumer Behavior Intention to Purchase Fast Food: A Study of McDonald's in Malaysia

Dr. Kavita Singh<sup>1</sup>, Joe Fen Tan<sup>2</sup>, Syaza Afiqah Binti Abdullah<sup>3</sup>, Hui Mei Tan<sup>4</sup>, Zhi Wen Tan<sup>5</sup>, Nurafikatul Fauziah<sup>6</sup>, Sakshi Sharma<sup>7</sup>, Dr. Daisy Mui Hung Kee<sup>8</sup>

Universiti Sains Malaysia<sup>2, 3, 4, 5, 8</sup>

Universitas Brawijaya<sup>6</sup>

IMS Engineering College<sup>1, 7</sup>

Correspondence Email: [joefen22@student.usm.my](mailto:joefen22@student.usm.my)

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#### ABSTRACT

McDonald's, as the largest worldwide retailer of foodservice are spread across more than 100 countries. The company's mission is to quickly adapt to generate profitable growth and to improve upon McDonald's to serve superior and high-quality meals to many people around the world. The study was conducted to identify and analyze the factors influencing consumer behaviors intention to purchase in the fast-food sector (McDonald's). We investigate whether product and service quality, pricing, promotion, brand awareness, restaurant surrounding and environment will affect the consumers' behavior to purchase fast food at McDonald's. Besides, the research is also related to SDGs as McDonald's has presented its corporate responsibilities. For the study, both primary and secondary data were collected from multiple sources and a digital questionnaire was created to collect data and information from 150 respondents. This study finds that pricing and promotion strategies are less significant in customer purchase decision. McDonald's in Malaysia should prioritize brand awareness, enhancing dining environment, maintain high-quality product, and service, and align with SDGs.

**Keywords:** Consumer Behaviour, Fast Food, McDonald's, Pricing, Product Quality, Purchase Intention, Service Quality

## **INTRODUCTION**

The fast-food industry has experienced remarkable growth worldwide, driven by factors such as urbanization, changing lifestyles, and globalization. Moreover, the influence of the fast-food industry extends beyond mere sustenance, often reflecting broader social and cultural shifts. This industry's offerings often cater to the busy schedules of urban populations, providing a quick and easily accessible food solution. In Malaysia, a multicultural country undergoing rapid economic development, the fast-food sector has become increasingly popular as a convenient and affordable dining option. McDonald's, as one of the leading fast-food chains operating in Malaysia, plays a significant role in shaping consumer behavior and preferences.

Consumer behavior determines the decision making in purchasing, yet the entire process is not only carried out by the consumers (Manongko, Indawati, Oroh, & Keparang, 2021). McDonald's, a renowned fast-food chain, holds a prominent position among global fast-food restaurants (Singireddy, 2020). With a presence in over 100 countries, McDonald's operates an extensive network of 37,855 outlets as of 2018, serving a staggering number of 69 million customers daily (Jian et al., 2021). In two reports released in 2018, it was revealed that McDonald's stands as the world's second-largest private employer, employing 1.7 million individuals. The establishment of McDonald's Corporation dates back to 1940 when Richard and Maurice found it in San Bernardino, California. The company underwent a transformation into a franchise in 1953, adopting the iconic Golden Arches logo, and inaugurating its first franchise in Phoenix, Arizona (Jian et al., 2021).

McDonald's Malaysia has established itself as a prominent player in the country's fast-food industry, blending the globally recognized brand with local flavors and preferences. The journey of McDonald's in Malaysia began in 1982 with the opening of its first outlet in Jalan Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur. Since then, the brand has rapidly expanded across the nation, reshaping the culinary landscape and consumer habits. By embracing the diverse culture and culinary heritage of Malaysia, McDonald's has curated a menu that offers a fusion of traditional tastes and classic favorites. From the iconic "McChicken" with a spicy twist to the introduction of seasonal specialties like the "Nasi Lemak" burger, McDonald's Malaysia has continually demonstrated its commitment to appealing to the palates of the local population.

Throughout its history, McDonald's Malaysia has gone beyond its role in the food industry and actively engaged in fostering community development. By launching diverse corporate social responsibility programs, the corporation has provided invaluable support to local communities, educational endeavors, and environmental conservation. Emphasizing excellence, convenience, and affordability, McDonald's has effortlessly ingrained itself as a cherished brand resonating with Malaysians across generations. As the company persists in its evolution and inventive endeavors, McDonald's Malaysia remains not merely a fast-food establishment, but rather a cultural marvel that beautifully reflects the nation's ever-changing and multifaceted essence.

Customer's satisfaction is an evaluation of a product or service's level of preferable refers to how well it meets or exceeds the expectations of the customers. The satisfied customers will be more likely stay loyal to the McDonald's brand, repeat the number of purchasing and directly recommend the brand to their friends. As a result, it drives revenue, reduces churn and boosts McDonald's brand and reputation. Purchase intention is a psychological indicator which represents the customers willingness or likelihood to purchase products or services in the future. Businesses use purchase intention to shape strategies to convert interest into sales, which fosters growth and profitability. However, purchase intention does not guarantee an actual purchase, because external factors can influence it.

Understanding the factors that influence consumer behavior and their intention to purchase fast food, particularly at McDonald's, is crucial for researchers and practitioners in the foodservice industry. By identifying these factors, businesses can develop effective marketing strategies to attract and retain customers in this highly competitive market.

This research aims to investigate the factors that influence consumer behavior and intention to purchase fast food at McDonald's in Malaysia. The independent variables under examination are product and service quality, price, promotion, brand awareness, and restaurant surrounding and environment. These factors have been widely acknowledged as significant determinants of consumer behavior in the fast-food industry.

Product and service quality play a crucial role in shaping consumers' perceptions and preferences. Consumers expect fast food to meet certain standards of taste, freshness, and overall quality. Price is another influential factor, with consumers in Malaysia, like elsewhere, considering affordability when making fast food choices. Effective promotional activities, such as discounts and limited-time offers, can attract customers and encourage repeated purchases. Brand awareness, driven by factors such as reputation and familiarity, influences consumer loyalty and choice of fast-food chains (Alam, Junaid, & Shabbir, 2019). Finally, the surrounding restaurant environment, including cleanliness, ambiance, and seating comfort, can enhance the overall dining experience and impact consumers' intention to purchase. Further, an expensive environmentally friendly product still gets customers attention (Mukaromah, Kusuma, & Anggraini, 2019).

While studies have examined these factors individually, limited research has focused on the combined influence of these factors specifically at McDonald's in Malaysia. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this research gap by investigating the collective impact of product and service quality, price, promotion, brand awareness, and restaurant surrounding and environment on consumers' intention to purchase fast food at McDonald's.

To achieve this objective, a quantitative research design will be employed, utilizing a survey questionnaire as the primary data collection tool. The questionnaire will capture relevant data from a diverse sample of Malaysian consumers who have purchased fast food at McDonald's. Various statistical techniques, including regression analysis, correlation analysis, and descriptive statistics, will be applied to analyze the data and identify significant relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable, which is customer behavior intention to purchase fast food.

The findings of this study will provide valuable insights into the factors influencing consumer behavior and intention to purchase fast food at McDonald's in Malaysia. These insights can inform the development of targeted marketing strategies and help businesses in the fast-food industry improve customer satisfaction and loyalty. A significant research gap regarding fast food consumption in Malaysia will be filled by the research, which will contribute to previous research on consumer behavior.

Comprehensively, this study aims to shed light on the factors influencing consumer behavior and purchase intention toward fast food at McDonald's in Malaysia, providing valuable insights for both academia and industry practitioners in understanding and catering to consumer preferences in the fast-food industry. As the fast-food landscape continues to evolve alongside Malaysia's economic and cultural progression, the findings of this research could serve as a benchmark for future analyses and guide the industry toward sustainable growth that harmonizes with consumer preferences.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Product and Service Quality**

Huam, Min, Chin, Rasli, and Hamid (2011) discovered that customer happiness and perceived service quality were the main factors influencing customers' intentions to make purchases at fast food restaurants among Malaysian undergraduate students. And product quality, particularly in the realm of food, is a crucial determinant of customer satisfaction and purchase intention within fast food establishments (Khan, Hussain, & Yaqoob, 2013; Sezgin & Göde, 2017). Additionally, Qin and Prybutok (2009) found that, in the setting of fast-food restaurants, service quality and customer satisfaction had a direct impact on behavioral intentions like word-of-mouth and repurchase intention. Customers who feel that the food and service at a restaurant with excellent quality are more likely to return and tell others about it (Sriyalatha & Kumarasinghe, 2021). In a similar vein, Rajput and Gahfoor (2020) found a strong correlation between consumers' intentions to return to fast food restaurants and the cuisine quality, restaurant service, physical environment, and customer satisfaction. In accordance with Makassy and Meng (2020), the fast-food sector is extremely competitive and diversified in Malaysia, with both local and international companies providing a range of cuisines and service philosophies. To increase customer satisfaction and buy intent, fast-food establishments must ascertain what their patrons value and expect in terms of product and service quality, and then consistently and successfully meet those needs.

H1: Product and service quality has positive relationship with customer behavior intention to purchase.

### **Price**

According to Xiao, Yang, and Iqbal (2018), perceived value, which is made up of perceived quality and felt sacrifice, mediates the negative association between price and intention to purchase of students from Generation Y against the fast-food business in Malaysia. Satisfaction with clients and fast-food restaurant customers' purchasing intentions are negatively impacted by price. (Huam, Min, Chin, Rasli, & Hamid, 2011; Khan, Hussain, & Yaqoob, 2013). Customers who perceive a high price at fast food restaurants are more likely to be dissatisfied and have negative purchase intentions (Xue et al., 2021; Quoquab, Sadom, & Mohammad, 2019). In order to increase customer satisfaction and purchase intent, fast food establishments must be aware of their patrons' price expectations and preferences and be able to successfully and aggressively meet their needs.

H2: Price has a negative relationship with customer behavior intention to purchase.

### **Promotion**

One of the components of the mix marketing that might affect consumer behavior and purchase intention in the fast-food sector is promotion. According to Kotler and Keller (2018), promotion refers to the communication efforts that educate, convince, and remind customers about a brand and its products. There are several methods for promotion, including public relations, promotion of sales, individual selling, and advertising. By raising awareness, stoking interest, igniting desire, and inspiring action, promotion can influence consumers' purchase intentions (Belch and Belch, 2018). According to Liew, Razali, Ng, Boon, and Sui's (2021) survey of 400 consumers in Kluang, Johor, one of the seven key factors influencing Generation Z customers' propensity to buy fast food was the attractiveness of the offer. In the opinion of Huam, Min, Chin, Rasli, and Hamid (2011), promotion had a favourable and substantial impact on client satisfaction, which in turn had a beneficial and important impact on purchase intention.

H3: Promotion has positive relationship with customer behavior intention to purchase.

### **Brand Awareness**

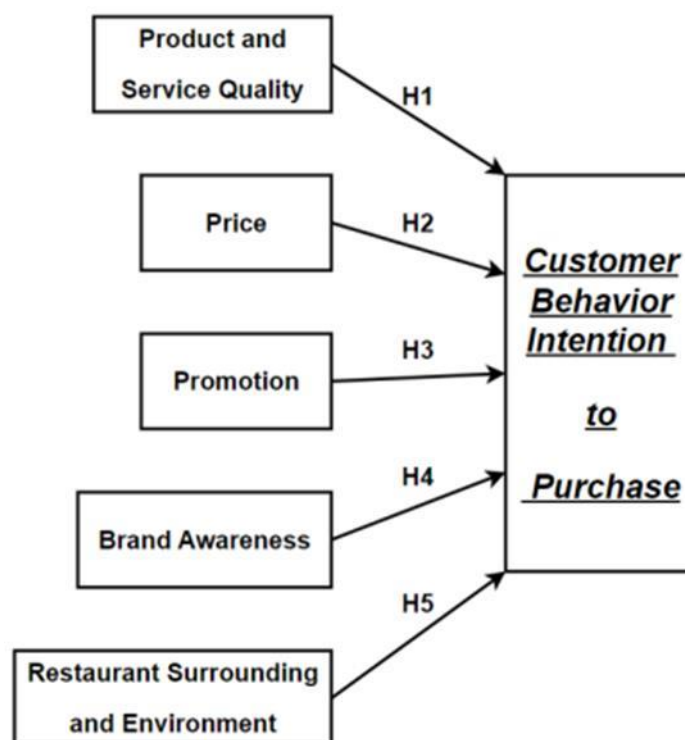
Brand awareness, according to Smith (1991), is the extent to which consumers are aware of and can distinguish a brand from its attributes. Brand awareness can influence consumer decision-making by enhancing brand recall, familiarity, connections, and preferences (Keller, 1993). Xue et al. (2021) claim that consumer attitudes towards fast food, such as health consciousness, taste preference, and convenience orientation, influence the favourable connection between brand awareness and customers' intents to purchase fast food. Customers are more likely to feel favorably about fast-food businesses if they are familiar with them, which in turn boosts their willingness to purchase. In addition, the intention of fast-food consumers to make a purchase is influenced by brand familiarity, which is favorably connected with customer satisfaction (Quoquab, Sadom, & Mohammad, 2019; Hanaysha, 2022). Customer satisfaction measures how much consumers feel a brand meets or exceeds their expectations. Customer satisfaction can affect purchase intention by encouraging customer loyalty, word-of-mouth, and repurchase behavior (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993). Customers of fast-food restaurants are more likely to report high satisfaction and high purchase intentions when they believe that the degree of brand recognition is high (Rodrigues Lopes, & Varela, 2021). Gaining consumer confidence and trust in fast food brands may increase brand recognition, which can impact consumers' purchasing intentions.

H4: Brand awareness has positive relationship with customer behavior intention to purchase.

### **Restaurant Surrounding and Environment**

Ambience and restaurant ambience are two crucial factors that affect consumer behavior and purchase intention in the fast-food sector. According to Hanaysha (2018), restaurant surroundings are the unimportant factors, such as location, accessibility, parking, safety, and cleanliness, that influence how patrons view and expect a restaurant. Restaurant environment refers to the interior components that affect a restaurant's ambience and mood, including the layout, design, lighting, music, colour, and fragrance (Rajput & Gahoor, 2020). Customer satisfaction mediates between the environment and ambience of restaurants and patrons' intents to make a purchase in fast food places, claim Huam, Min, Chin, Rasli, and Hamid (2011). They argue that when customers experience a welcoming restaurant atmosphere, they are more likely to express high satisfaction and high buy intent. Additionally, the environment and atmosphere of restaurants have a beneficial impact on customer loyalty, which in turn influences patrons' intents to make a purchase at fast food establishments (Quoquab, Sadom, & Mohammad, 2019; Rodrigues, Lopes, & Varela, 2021).

H5: Restaurant surrounding, and environment has positive relationship with customer behavior intention to purchase.



## RESEARCH METHOD

### Samples and Procedures

The survey sample was drawn by distributing questionnaires to the public via Google Forms to gather an understanding of “The Factors Influencing Consumer Behavior Intention to Purchase Fast Food: A Study of McDonald's in Malaysia”. Our target respondents are whoever have the experience in consuming the food and beverage in Malaysia McDonalds. The survey with Google Form will be disseminated through social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and other social media to reach 150 consumers. To protect consumer privacy, the data collected is solely used for this research and is not shared with outsiders. Overall, all questions in the survey were related to “Factors Influencing Consumer Behavioral Intention to Purchase McDonald's Fast Food in Malaysia”.

### Measurement

The survey conducted by distributing questionnaires is divided into section A and section B. Section A is demographic information and section B is related to “Factors Influencing Consumer Behavior Intention to Purchase” which consists of product and service quality (H1), Price (H2), Promotion (H3), customer satisfaction on purchase intention (H4), brand awareness (H5), and the restaurant environment and surroundings (H6). The research method used is a quantitative method. According to Arikunto (2006) quantitative research is a research approach that uses a lot of numbers, starting from collecting data, disclosing the data obtained, and presenting the results. Data measurement and processing will be carried out with the help of the SPSS statistical software, and the results will be interpreted as the conclusions of this study.

### ***Section A: Respondent Demographics***

Respondent demographics were collected using a single question including gender, age, ethnicity, highest educational level, occupation, income level and frequency of visits to McDonald's. With this data, we can gain an understanding of target customers in Malaysia McDonald, segment responses for trends and positioning the strategies for ensuring success. It also facilitates comparative analysis, aids in measuring intervention effectiveness and ensures that conclusions are generalizable.

### ***Section B: Factors Influencing Consumer Behavior Intention to Purchase***

#### ***Service and Product Quality (H1)***

It is measured to see customer satisfaction regarding the quality of products and services provided. It is an independent variable. Generally, the quality of the service and product will be the best indicator for examining the customers' satisfaction. There are 6 questions that will be answered by respondents in this regard. Respondents were asked to provide their views regarding the quality of service and quality of McDonald's products in accordance with their feelings. The survey consists of the products' tasty, variety types of products, food hygiene requirements, aesthetics needs, service quality provided by the McDonalds staff and their dress code.

#### ***Price (H2)***

It is measured to verify whether McDonald's provides the correct and relevant price for each product as what is advertised. It is one of the independent variables. Basically, the price act as the purchase power of the customers which indicates whether the consumers are willing to purchase the food and beverage in McDonald. There are 4 questions that will be answered by the respondents in this regard. The questionnaires related to the reasonable price for the foods and beverages McDonald based on the purchasing power of the customers and comparing to the competitors, raise price due to the inflation and the price offered is relevant to the McDonald's products.

#### ***Promotion (H3)***

It is used to consider how far the promotion method used by McDonald's and how much effect the promotional methods have on sales. It is one of the independent variables. Basically, the advertising, sales promotion, discounting price promotion, Buy One Free One promotion or promotion provided for downloading the McDonald application will be preferred by the consumers because these gains are beneficial to the consumers. There are 6 questions that will be answered by respondents regarding this matter. The survey in promotion part includes the promotion strategies, opinion on the promotion offered, advertisements and social media, and preferable purchasing on seasonal promotion.

#### ***Brand Awareness (H4)***

It is measured to find out how much influence brand awareness has on attracting customers. It is one of the independent variables. A recognized brand will be more famous, popular and have a direct influence the purchase intention of the customers. There are 4 questions that will be answered by respondents in this regard. The questionnaires are about the familiarity of the brand logo, reliability on McDonald's products, number of consuming McDonald's products and services.

#### ***The Restaurant Surrounding and Environment (H5)***

It is measured to see how good and strategic the location of McDonald's is so that it can increase customer interest in buying its products. It is an independent variable. Generally, the clean, enjoyable and comfortable surrounding will be more preferred by the

customers. There are 4 questions that will be answered by respondents in this regard. The questionnaires related to the restaurant surrounding and environment are the extend of relaxing in the McDonald's restaurant, the cleanliness and hygiene level of the surrounding and environment, suitable instrumental or music displayed, and the suitable equipment in Malaysia McDonald's restaurants.

*Customer Satisfaction with Purchase Intention*

It is the dependent variable. In this subsection will be investigated whether the independent variable (product and service quality, price, promotion, brand awareness and restaurant surrounding and environment) have positive or negative relationship on the customer behavior intention to purchase. Generally, the consumers will be satisfied if their needs and wants are met during purchasing or consuming the products and services offered. There are 4 questions that will be answered by respondents related to this. The questionnaires are the customers' satisfaction on all of the aspects in McDonald, intention to continue purchasing, satisfaction to recommend, and loyal level to McDonald.

Measurement through these questions uses a 5-point Likert scale with different degrees, namely 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree" and will be used for all questions.



## RESULTS

**Table 1.** Summary of the Respondents' Demography (*N*=150)

Construct	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	83	55.3
Female	67	44.7
Ethnicity		
Malay	46	30.7
Chinese	82	54.7
Indian	22	14.7
Others	1	0.7
Age		
18-24	84	56.0
25-34	24	16.0
35-44	24	16.0
45-54	12	8.0
55 and above	6	4.0
Educational Level		
High School	22	14.7
Diploma	33	22.0
Bachelor's Degree	90	60.0
Master's Degree	4	2.7
PhD	1	0.7
Monthly Household Income		
RM4,849 and below (B40)	102	68.0
RM4,850 - RM10,959 (M40)	42	28.0
RM10,960 or more (T20)	6	4.0
Occupation		
Student	77	51.3
Employed	65	43.3
Unemployed	4	2.7
Retired	4	2.7
How often do you visit and purchase meals at McDonald's monthly?		
Not more than 2 times	47	31.3
3 - 5 times	70	46.7
6 - 8 times	25	16.7
9 times or above	8	5.3

Table 1 provides an overview of demographic characteristics of the respondents. The questionnaire was filled out by 150 respondents which consists of 55.3% of male respondents and 44.7% of female respondents. The majority of respondents are Chinese (54.7%) and Malay (30.7%) while 14.7% respondents are Indians. 56% of the respondents are at the age between 18 years old to 24 years old. In addition, 68% of the respondents are B40 as their monthly household income is below RM4,849. The reason of this result might be because 51.3% of the respondents are students. Most of the respondents (46.7%) visit and purchase meals at McDonalds 3-5 times monthly.

**Table 2.** Descriptive Analysis, Cronbach's Coefficients Alpha, and Zero-Order Correlations of All Study Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
Product and Service Quality	<b>0.797</b>					
Pricing Strategy	0.672**	<b>0.817</b>				
Promotion Strategy	0.602**	0.587**	<b>0.819</b>			
Brand Awareness	0.608**	0.602**	0.597**	<b>0.707</b>		
Restaurant Surrounding and Environment	0.665**	0.620**	0.591**	0.669**	<b>0.843</b>	
Purchase Intention	0.702**	0.624**	0.515**	0.736**	0.732**	<b>0.755</b>
Number of Items	6	4	6	4	4	4
Mean	4.206	3.958	4.039	4.143	4.065	4.198
Standard Deviation	0.506	0.739	0.627	0.637	0.698	0.558

Note: N=150; \*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01, \*\*\*p < 0.001; Diagonal entries in bold indicate Cronbach's coefficient alpha.

Table 2 displays descriptive statistics, information on dependability, and zero-order correlations between variables. All variables tested show strong reliability ranging from .797 to .755. To evaluate the effect of product and service quality, pricing strategy, promotion strategy, brand awareness, restaurant surrounding and environment and purchase intention, we must understand the correlation between the variables, as well as the strength or weakness of the correlation. The Cronbach's alpha for the pricing strategy ( $\alpha=0.817$ ), promotion strategy ( $\alpha=0.819$ ), and restaurant surrounding and environment ( $\alpha=0.843$ ) have a good reliability level while product and service quality ( $\alpha=0.797$ ) and brand awareness ( $\alpha=0.707$ ) have an acceptable reliability level.

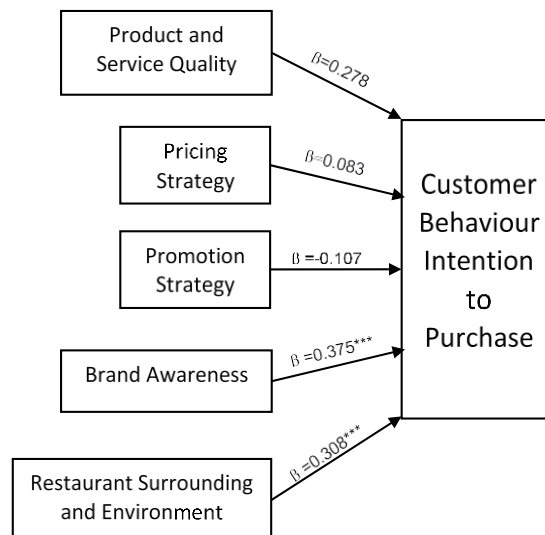
**Table 3.** Summary of Regression Analysis

Variables	Purchase Intention	p-value
Product and Service Quality	0.278***	0.000
Pricing Strategy	0.083	0.228
Promotion Strategy	-0.107	0.099
Brand Awareness	0.375***	0.000
Restaurant Surrounding and Environment	0.308***	0.000
Adjusted R <sub>2</sub>	0.682	
R <sub>2</sub>	0.693	
F value	65.031	
Durbin-Watson Statistic	1.959	

Note: N = 150; \* p < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01; \*\*\*p < 0.001; Dependent variable: Purchase Intention

Table 3 presents the results of the regression analysis, specifically focusing on the purchase intention as the dependent variable. The table includes five independent variables which are product and service quality, pricing strategy, promotion strategy, brand awareness and restaurant surrounding and environment. The output indicated that product and service quality, brand awareness and restaurant surrounding and environment significantly and positively related to behavioral purchase intention. As a result, H1, H4 and H5 are proven. The R<sup>2</sup> value of the result is 0.693. The study found that product quality and service awareness, as well as restaurant environment and surroundings are responsible for 69.3% of behavioral change in purchase intention. Brand awareness shows a beta value of 0.375, which is the most influencing factor

impacting the dependent variable. In contrast, product and service quality displayed a beta value of 0.278, and restaurant surrounding and environment illustrated a beta value of 0.308. On the contrary, pricing strategy and promotion strategy show an insignificant effect on behavioral intention. Hence, H2 and H3 are not supported.



## DISCUSSION

This research showed a significant and positive relationship between brand awareness, restaurant surrounding and environment and product and service quality with consumer behavior intention to purchase fast food at McDonald's. On the other hand, pricing strategy does not have a significant relationship, whereas promotion strategy is also insignificant and has a negative relationship with consumer purchase intention in McDonald's.

The study showed that brand awareness has a positive relationship and is the most significant factor influencing consumer behavior and intention to purchase McDonald's products. From the result of the questionnaire, most respondents strongly agree with the statement "I am familiar with their logo brand". Previous studies regarding customer purchase intention by Macdonald and Sharp (2000) also align with our final result. According to their research, the recognition of a brand will still be the most important and influencing factor in making a purchase decision even if consumers are interested in buying a particular product. Logos are among the most noticeable visual components of a brand (Wallace, 2001). Thus, they can make it easier to recognize the brand and distinguish it from rival options (Janiszewski & Meyvis, 2001; MacInnis, Shapiro, & Mani, 1999). As McDonald's logo is one of the most recognizable logos worldwide, respondents feel trusted and comfortable with it because of its prevalence and familiarity. Therefore, they will tend to purchase McDonald's products whenever they wish to consume fast food.

Next, the second crucial factor affecting consumer purchase intention is restaurant surrounding and environment as the study also proves that it also positively and significantly correlated with the behavioral intention to purchase fast food in McDonald's. Nowadays, more people are concerned about improving their life quality and enjoying a comfortable dining room. (Xiao, Yang, & Iqbal, 2018). Most respondents strongly agree that McDonald's is a good and relaxing place for them which is also supported by previous research by Ryu and Jang (2006). According to their research, a pleasant atmosphere is crucial for encouraging customers to make more purchases, which

increases profit. In addition, the research of Lim (2010) also indicated that a pleasant atmosphere will repeatedly dedicate a beneficial scale of customer retention in the fast-food industry. As a result, the restaurant surrounding and environment should always be focused on in order to encourage consumers to purchase the products.

Several factors, particularly in the context of McDonald's in Malaysia, affect consumer behavior and desire to purchase fast food. The results of a study on this subject would be very helpful in understanding customer preferences and decision-making procedures. Based on the factors mentioned, a variety of factors, including brand reputation and image, accessibility and convenience, product quality and taste, pricing and value perception, peer influence and social proof, concerns about one's health and nutrition, advertising and promotions, as well as cultural and societal factors, influence consumer behavior and purchase intention.

A large part of the decision-making process for McDonald's customers is influenced by its strong brand image and reputation, as well as the convenience and accessibility of its various channels, such as drive-thru lines and delivery services. A strong brand can create a sense of trust, reliability, and consistency in the minds of customers if they are familiar and recognize the brand. A well-established brand can lead to positive preconceptions, setting the stage for a positive dining experience.

It is significant to consider the food's quality, flavor, and perceived value for money when customers choose McDonald's as their restaurant. The customers expect high quality, tasty, and well-prepared dishes. Additionally, a friendly and attentive staff who provide efficient and personalized service contribute to a positive experience. Consistency in delivering quality products contributes to a positive customer experience.

Customer experience is greatly affected by a restaurant's physical environment. A pleasant and inviting environment can enhance the overall dining experience, making customers feel comfortable and relaxed. Recognize that cleanliness and ambiance have a significant impact on the success of your restaurant. Furthermore, factors like restaurant noise, lighting and seating arrangements influence customers' perception of their dining experience.

The pricing strategies is not conducting a significant influence to the customers satisfaction on purchase intention in our research. However, consumer behavior can also influenced by pricing method especially during inflation in economy, including affordability and promotional offers. Furthermore, it is important to consider the impact of social elements like online reviews and peer recommendations. Consumer preferences for better food options and transparency in ingredient source are both influenced by growing consumer awareness of health and nutrition.

The promotion strategies in our research have less significant influence on the customers purchase intention. However, consumer behavior can be further influenced by successful advertising and promotional initiatives that are specific to the Malaysian market, especially during seasonal period. Last but not least, cultural and socioeconomic elements may influence consumers' inclination to buy fast food from McDonald's, including regional preferences and religious consideration.

As for the factor of product and service quality, this study shows that it also positively and significantly correlated with the purchase intention at McDonald's in Malaysia. This is also supported by the research by previous studies, whereby customers are more likely to make a purchase when a product's quality is high (Saleem, Prot, Anderson, & Lemieux, 2017). When assessing a product's quality, most consumers focus on its key

attributes (Kirmani & Baumgartner, 2000). Many respondents think that McDonald's products have met the food hygiene requirements as McDonald's operates under the supervision and regulations of the Malaysian Food Safety and Quality Division (FSQD) (McDonald's, n.d.). Not only the product quality, but our findings also show that service quality also be one of the criteria that affect consumer purchase intention. This is aligned with Choudhury (2013) who presented service quality has a positive and significant influence on purchase intention. There is prior research by Hennig-Thurau & Klee (1997) also proved that high-quality services are more likely to be purchased again by customers. According to Ha, John, Janda, and Muthaly (2011), a brand's perceived service quality has a direct impact on customer satisfaction and purchase decisions. Consequently, consumers are willing to buy fast food from McDonald's if they feel satisfied with the product and service quality of McDonald's.

According to the result, it has been proven that pricing has an insignificant relationship with the behavioral intention to purchase fast food at McDonald's in Malaysia. This indicated that McDonald's pricing strategy not really can influence consumers to purchase their products. Hence, this also indicates that the Generation Z consumers in Malaysia tend to not be paying attention to the price when they are consuming fast food. Our study also clearly showed that the pricing strategy has no significant relationship with consumer purchase intention in McDonald's compared to brand awareness which is the most significant factor. This is supported by the previous research by Levy, Weitz, and Watson (2014) whereby it is critical for a business to keep repeat customers who are willing to spend more for their preferred brands and do not make purchases based just on pricing.

The analysis reveals the promotion strategy has no significant impact on consumer intention to purchase fast food at McDonald's. This finding is consistent with previous research conducted by Rares and Jorie (2015), which demonstrated that promotions do not significantly influence consumer purchase decisions. Our own findings also support this conclusion and indicate that a majority of the respondents have a high level of education. Consequently, these individuals are not swayed by promotional strategies employed by McDonald's because they are well aware of the unhealthy nature of fast food.

In short, these findings have implications for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 8, 12, and 13. They indicate the potential for the fast-food industry to contribute to sustainable economic growth (SDG 8) by attracting customers through quality and brand recognition. They also emphasize the need for responsible consumption and production patterns (SDG 12), as consumers prioritize factors beyond price. Lastly, the study highlights the importance of climate action (SDG 13) in the fast-food industry by indicating that promotional strategies had no significant impact, indicating a need for environmentally friendly practices.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research paper investigated the factors that impact customer purchase intention at McDonald's. The findings indicate that brand awareness, the restaurant's surrounding environment, and the quality of products and services significantly influence consumers' decision to make a purchase. On the other hand, the influence of pricing and promotion strategies was found to be less significant.

Based on our research, we recommend McDonald to be more focusing on improving their reputation, enhance the quality of the product and service and improve the restaurant ambiance. By implementing various strategies, such as transparency about

sourcing ingredients, ethical business practices and involvement in the community, McDonald's reputation can be enhanced. Being responsible for the environment, promoting sustainability and providing health-conscious products can contribute to a positive reputation. Engaging in public relations efforts to highlight these aspects can positively influence customer perceptions and attract a broader range of consumers. Focusing on using high-quality ingredients, improving food preparation methods, and ensuring consistency in taste and presentation can lead to happier customers. A good dining experience can also be improved by investing in employee training in order to provide attentive, efficient, and friendly service. By improving the ambiance, McDonald's can create a more pleasant and enjoyable atmosphere for its customers. This might involve updating interior design, optimizing seating arrangements for comfort and privacy, and creating a clean and inviting space. Considering factors such as lighting, background music, and overall aesthetics can contribute to a more appealing environment that encourages customers to spend more time and enjoy their meals.

Understanding these elements and their respective weight can help McDonald's and other fast-food restaurants create marketing plans to draw in and keep customers in Malaysia. To stay competitive in the fast-food sector, firms must constantly modify their product and marketing strategies to reflect shifting consumer tastes and habits. These findings have implications for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 8 (sustainable economic growth), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production patterns), and SDG 13 (climate action). The study suggests that the fast-food industry can contribute to sustainable economic growth by focusing on quality and brand recognition, while also highlighting the importance of environmentally friendly practices, given the limited impact of promotional strategies.

In conclusion, McDonald's in Malaysia should prioritize brand awareness, focus on enhancing the dining environment, maintain high product and service quality, and consider strategies beyond pricing promotions to effectively attract and retain customers, all while aligning with sustainable development goals for a more responsible and impactful business approach.

### **LIMITATION**

This research has several limitations. First is Sample Representativeness. The study's sample may not fully represent the diversity of McDonald's customers in Malaysia. If the sample is limited to a specific geographical area or certain demographic groups, the findings may not accurately reflect the behavior and intentions of the entire customer population. Besides that, limiting the study to McDonald's may overlook the influence of other fast-food chains or competitors in the market. Factors that affect consumer behavior intention may vary depending on the specific brand or industry. Therefore, the findings may not capture the broader fast-food landscape in Malaysia.

### **DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS**

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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