

IMPACT OF SERVICE QUALITIES AS ANTECEDENTS ON CUSTOMER ATTITUDES TOWARDS BRAND PREFERENCE: BRAND ANALYSIS OF PIZZA TELEFONO RESTAURANT

Michael Bhobet B. Baluyot*

Abstract

This study aimed to determine the relationship of service qualities and customer attitudes towards brand preference of Pizza Telefono Restaurant. Participants of the study were composed of 121 customers in the two branches of the restaurant (Makati & Bicutan). Upon retrieval, questionnaires were checked for completeness of responses and only 112 or 92% has a valid response. This research study is anchored in the conceptual framework of Hwang (2011) Service Qualities, Customer Attitudes and Brand Preference Model. Simple random sampling was used in the study. Data were gathered through the use of a questionnaire which is adopted in the study of Hwang (2011) and were statistically treated using percentage, mean and standard deviation. For inferential statistics, the Pearson r was used to compute the correlation coefficient of the results. The study uses six criteria composed of the service qualities namely physical environment quality, interactional quality and outcome quality, customer attitudes namely utilitarian and hedonic customer attitudes towards restaurant brands and brand preference criteria. Furthermore, the results of the study revealed that interactional quality, utilitarian and hedonic attitudes has a significant relationship towards brand preference and physical environment and outcome quality has no significant relationship towards brand preference. The customers look for value and the whole experience, rather than just considered the physical environment and outcome quality. The way in handle the customers along every step of their dining experience has an impact on customer's brand

preference. The result of the study serves as a basis to develop a brand standard mechanism for restaurant brand specifically for Pizza Telefono Restaurant.

Keywords: Service Qualities Antecedents, Customer Attitudes, Brand Preference, Brand Standard Mechanism, Restaurant Brand

Introduction

Delivering quality experience to satisfy the customers in service industry is very challenging and meeting the customer expectations nowadays is the parameter of the preference of the customer to choose a brand based on the level of the performance of the business (Brady & Cronin, 2001).

There are different service quality measures used to test the level of performance of the business which was established and made by different authors such as the LODGSERV (Knutson, Stevens, Wullaert, Patton, & Yokoyama, 1990), DINESERV (Stevens, Knutson, & Patton, 1995), TANGSERV (Raajpoot, 2002), and DINESCAPE (Ryu & Jang, 2008). In the study conducted by Han and Ryu (2009), it shows that ambiance or the physical attributes of the brand has a big impact in the preference and satisfaction of the customers. In the study conducted by Kim and Ok (2010) noted that interactional quality affects customer satisfaction. In the study conducted by Namkung and Jang (2007), they focused and reiterated that food quality is one big factor of the satisfaction and preference of the customers.

* Technological University of the Philippines, Philippines. Email: michaelbhobetbaluyot@yahoo.com

In addition to service quality, brands are important to customers. According to Bhatti, Parveen and Arshad (2011), brands is included in the system of each individual. In some other customers, the measure of their preference or loyalty or choice depends on the brand rather than the quality of the product, Zhou and Wong (2008). According to Bolton and Drew (1991), the parameter of the satisfaction of the customers is based on the performance evaluation of the customer in the brand which on the other hand will dictate the attitude of the customers to the brand. This research modified the adopted conceptual framework of Hwang (2011) which comprises the Physical environment quality, interactional quality, and outcome quality which are the antecedents of utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward brand preference.

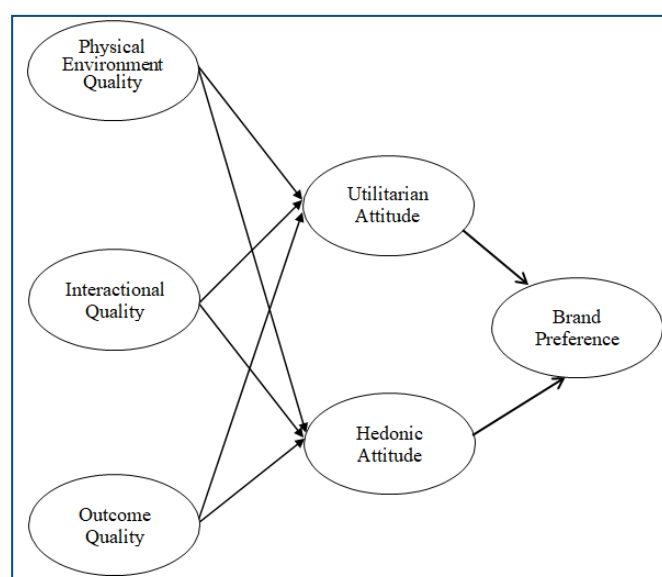


Fig. 1: Service Qualities, Customer Attitudes and Brand Reference Model

Physical environment is the man-made, physical surroundings, not the natural or social environment (Bitner, 1992). In the proposed theoretical model of Mehrabian and Russell (1974) (also called M-R environmental psychology model), it explained the effect of environment on human behavior, and the model is now widely used and strongly supported in many areas, including retailing and marketing.

According to (Oh, 2000), interactional quality is very critical since it dictates the perception of the customers to the service performance as part of their expectation. SERVQUAL which is developed by Parasuraman et

al. (1988) comprises of the acronym RATER which stands for reliability, assurance, tangibility, empathy and responsiveness which most of the researchers and some of the businesses used to measure the level of performance both the strength and weaknesses as well as the opportunities and threats of the business that affects the service quality.

Outcome quality according to Grönroos (1990), measures the total effect, experience and impact of the service performance quality of the customers. In terms of food quality as part of the key factors that the customers evaluating to assess and evaluate the level of performance of a business that result to preference of the customer to the brand. (Raajpoot (2002); Sulek & Hensley (2004); Peri (2006)). The utilitarian dimension is associated with instrumental, efficient, task-specific, and practical benefits thus, customers holding a utilitarian attitude are more likely to choose a product for its economic value, convenience, and time savings (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982 (Teo, 2001)). The hedonic dimension, however, is related to aesthetic, experiential, and emotional arousal (Batra & Ahtola, 1990; Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998).

Brand preference is important for business as a component of brand loyalty and it is the foundation of the success of every business in the industry depending on the preference of the customers (Rundle-Thiele & Mackay, 2001). For that reason, brand preference is a way to enhance sales.

According to the study of Hwang, brand preference depends heavily on previous customer experiences. This means that if the customers engaged and have a positive experience based on the performance of the brand, brand preference will be established. In this case, positive utilitarian and hedonic attitudes toward restaurant brands will be achieved by the brand since the customer experience is satisfied and the preference of the brand will be on top of the mind and choice of the customers. Thus, this study seeks to determine the relationship of service qualities and customer attitudes towards brand preference.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to determine the relationship of service qualities and customer attitudes towards brand preference. The results of the study will serve as a basis in the development of brand standard mechanism for the restaurant. Specifically, the following questions sought

to answer: *What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender and monthly income?; How do the respondents rate the actual performance level of the brand according to physical environment quality, interactional quality, outcome quality, utilitarian attitude, hedonic attitude and brand preference?; Is there a significant relationship between the service qualities and customer attitudes towards brand preference? and; Based on the results of the study, what brand standard mechanism will be proposed for Pizza Telefono Restaurant?*

Materials and Methods

The study utilized the descriptive method of research and used quantitative approaches. This method of research was specifically employed by the researcher to interpret and analyze data of existing conditions prevailing in the research environment. Data were obtained utilizing the questionnaires as the primary instrument.

Respondents of the study were composed of restaurant customers of the two branches of Pizza Telefono, Makati and Bicutan branch.

Total numbers of respondents from the two branches were 121. The total numbers of respondents were based on the average transaction count per branch. For Makati branch, the average transaction count per day is 62 customers and for Bicutan branch the average transaction count is 59. The total number of customers from the two branches of Pizza Telefono Restaurant was used as respondents of the study, simple random sampling was used and the study treated all the entire population as the sample with 100% retrieval rate. Valid response rate is 92% or 112 and the remaining 8% of the respondents was not included because of incompleteness of the survey answers submitted to the researcher. As shown on Table 1, the distribution of the participants was as follows:

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents

Pizza Telefono Branch	Average Transaction Count per Day	%
Makati	62	51%
Bicutan	59	49%
Total	121	100

Research Instrument and Validation

A 55 items survey questionnaire was utilized to gather the needed data. The list of criteria was divided into, (1) Physical Environment Quality, (2) Interactional Quality, (3) Outcome Quality, (4) Utilitarian Attitude, (5) Hedonic Attitude, and (6) Brand Preference.

The survey questionnaire was adopted in the study of Hwang (2011). Based on the testing of reliability and validity of the survey questionnaires, the factor loadings were equal to or greater than .648, and all factor loadings were significant at $p < .001$, with t -values ranging from 11.82 to 25.42. The average variance extracted (AVE) for all constructs was higher than .50, which is the threshold value. This shows the convergent validity of the measurement scales was well established. The composite reliabilities of constructs were higher than .70, ranging from .83 to .95. AVE for each construct was higher than all of the squared correlations (R^2) between pairs of constructs.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher prepared a letter requesting permission to conduct the study. The researcher personally visited the two branches of Pizza Telefono Restaurant (Makati and Bicutan) and distributed the survey questionnaire to the respondents.

The respondents were asked to rate the actual performance level of each criteria using the 7-Point Likert Scale. Upon retrieval of the questionnaires, they were checked for completeness of responses. Out of 121 survey questionnaires distributed, only 112 or 92% has a valid response.

Statistical Treatment

After the questionnaires were gathered, the responses of the respondents were tallied and encoded by the researcher. The descriptive statistics was used to make a meaningful quantitative analysis of the data that were gathered.

To interpret the data pertaining to the demographics of the respondents, the one-variable table was used.

To determine the descriptive summary of service qualities, customer attitudes and brand preference criteria, the mean and standard deviation was utilized.

To determine the relationship of service qualities and customer attitudes towards brand preference the Pearson Correlation was used.

To determine the degree of importance of each attributes, the 7-Point Likert Scale was used.

	Range	Interpretation
7	6.51 – 7.00	Strongly Agree
6	5.51 – 6.50	Agree
5	4.51 – 5.50	Somewhat Agree
4	3.51 – 4.50	Neutral
3	2.51 – 3.50	Somewhat Disagree
2	1.51 – 2.50	Disagree
1	1.00 – 1.50	Strongly Disagree

Results and Discussions

Table 2 shows the profile of the respondents indicating the percentage distribution by age, gender and monthly income of the customers who visited the restaurant.

Table 2: Respondent's Profile

Age			
		Frequency	Percent
	below 25	24	21.4
	25-39	59	52.7
	40-54	17	15.2
	55-75	12	10.7
Valid	Total	112	100
Monthly Income			
	10K-below	6	5.4
	10,001-20,000	31	27.7
	20,001-30,000	52	46.4
	30,001-40,000	7	6.3
	40,001-50,000	16	14.3
Valid	Total	112	100
Gender			
	Male	64	57.1
	Female	48	42.9
Valid	Total	112	100

Table 2 shows the profile of the respondents indicating the percentage distribution by age, gender and monthly income of the customers who visited the restaurant. As can be seen in Table 2, majority of the respondents are the group of millennial in the range of 25-39 years old which is 52.7%. It was followed by the so called Generation Z in the range below 25 years old which is 21.4%. It was followed by the group of Generation X in the range of 40-54 years old which is 15.2% of the total respondents and lastly the Baby boomers at the range of 55-75 years old which is 10.7% of the total respondents. As cited by [24] Reynolds, J. and Hwang, J. (2006) in today's younger restaurant customers are seeking bolder, more exotic tastes from a variety of cultures and these consumers are leading the revolution in ethnic cuisine dining. Generation X customers were born between 1965 and 1976 and are now between the ages of 29 and 40. Generation Y customers were born between 1977 and 1994 and are now between the ages of 11 and 28. Both Generation X and Y customers are adventurous and not intimidated to try something new and different while dining out and they tend to frequent a variety of restaurants on a regular basis. As for the monthly income, the leading is earning ₱20,001-₱30,000 which resulted to 46.4% of the total respondents and the least is those respondents who earned below ₱10,000 which resulted to 5.4%. Based on the results presented, the respondents buying power for the brand is high because most of the respondents are capable to spend for the products being offered by the brand. Since the best seller of the brand is pizza and pasta and most of the products are for sharing, the capacity of the customers to buy is high. The average check of one customer per day is around ₱400-₱500 based on the actual sales of the two branches of Pizza Telefono Restaurant.

As to gender, male dominated the pool of respondents in the restaurant with 64 respondents or equivalent to 57.1% as compared to only 48 female respondents with 42.9%. This finding implied that the most of the respondents were male due to the preferences that most of the dining customers were male who love to eat and go out with family, friends and relatives. And since, the branches are located in CBD or Central Business District, the pool of customers is employees comprises of male.

As presented in Table 3-8, it showed the descriptive summary of the assessment of the customers to the six criteria of service quality comprises of physical environment quality, interactional quality and outcome

quality, customer attitudes which comprises of utilitarian and hedonic attitude of customers towards restaurant brand and the brand preference criteria.

Of the 16 items for Physical Environment Quality, the highest rating is attribute 9 which stated “*This is an attractive restaurant.*” with 6.42 mean score, and the lowest rating is attribute 15 which stated “*This restaurant’s seats are comfortable.*” with a mean score of 5.20.

Table 3: Physical Environment Quality

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
PEQ1	5.88	0.322	Agree
PEQ2	5.77	0.644	Agree
PEQ3	5.88	0.322	Agree
PEQ4	5.88	0.322	Agree
PEQ5	5.87	0.368	Agree
PEQ6	5.96	0.186	Agree
PEQ7	5.96	0.444	Agree
PEQ8	5.92	0.273	Agree
PEQ9	6.42	0.779	Agree
PEQ10	5.96	0.186	Agree
PEQ11	5.79	0.412	Agree
PEQ12	5.84	0.415	Agree
PEQ13	5.96	0.186	Agree
PEQ14	5.90	0.299	Agree
PEQ15	5.20	0.399	Agree
PEQ16	6.00	0.000	Agree
Total	5.89	0.347	Agree

For the Interactional Quality, the highest rating is attribute 17 which stated “*During busy times, this restaurant employees shift to help each other maintain speed and quality of service.*” with a mean score of 6.13 and the lowest rating is attribute 13 which stated “*This restaurant quickly corrects anything that is wrong.*” with a mean score 5.07.

Table 4: Interactional Quality

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
IQ1	5.93	0.259	Agree
IQ2	6.00	0.000	Agree
IQ3	5.88	0.322	Agree

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
IQ4	5.97	0.211	Agree
IQ5	5.87	0.342	Agree
IQ6	5.77	0.502	Agree
IQ7	5.73	0.484	Agree
IQ8	5.73	0.585	Agree
IQ9	5.76	0.507	Agree
IQ10	5.61	0.831	Agree
IQ11	5.80	0.499	Agree
IQ12	5.48	0.782	Somewhat Agree
IQ13	5.07	0.640	Somewhat Agree
IQ14	5.82	0.506	Agree
IQ15	5.89	0.364	Agree
IQ16	5.80	0.442	Agree
IQ17	6.13	0.368	Agree
IQ18	5.08	0.273	Somewhat Agree
IQ19	6.04	0.298	Agree
Total	5.76	0.432	Agree

For Outcome Quality, of the seven attributes, attribute 7 got the highest rating with a mean score of 5.98 which stated “*Food is served at the appropriate temperature in this restaurant.*” and attribute 4 got the lowest with a mean score of 5.39 which stated “*This restaurant has healthy food.*”

Table 5: Outcome Quality

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
OQ1	5.96	0.401	Agree
OQ2	5.88	0.374	Agree
OQ3	5.92	0.383	Agree
OQ4	5.39	0.591	Somewhat Agree
OQ5	5.92	0.359	Agree
OQ6	5.96	0.501	Agree
OQ7	5.98	0.232	Agree
Total	5.86	0.406	Agree

For the utilitarian attitude of the customer towards the restaurant brand, the highest rating among the five attributes is attribute 1 which is being “*Effective*” with a mean score of 6.00 and the lowest rating are attributes 2 and 3 with both mean score of 5.90 which is being “*Helpful*” and being “*Functional*”.

Table 6: Utilitarian Attitude of the Customer

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
UA1	6.00	0.000	Agree
UA2	5.90	0.328	Agree
UA3	5.90	0.328	Agree
UA4	5.97	0.211	Agree
UA5	5.98	0.189	Agree
Total	5.95	0.211	Agree

Meanwhile for the hedonic attitude of the customer towards the restaurant brand, the highest rating among the five attributes is attribute 1 which is being “Fun” with a mean score of 5.98 and the lowest rating with a mean score of 5.56 is attribute 3 which is being “Delightful”.

Table 7: Hedonic Attitude of the Customer

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
HA1	5.98	0.189	Agree
HA2	5.91	0.369	Agree
HA3	5.56	0.836	Agree
HA4	5.95	0.442	Agree
HA5	5.94	0.308	Agree
Total	5.87	0.429	Agree

For the brand preference of the customer, among the three attributes the highest rating is attribute 1 which stated “When I make a dining out decision, I consider this restaurant a viable choice very often.” with a mean score of 6.01 and the lowest rating is attribute 2 with a mean score of 5.90 which stated “This restaurant meets my dining needs better than other comparable casual dining restaurants.”

Table 8: Brand Preference

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
BP1	6.01	0.212	Agree
BP2	5.90	0.402	Agree
BP3	6.00	0.300	Agree
Total	5.97	0.305	Agree

Table 9 presented the summary reflected significant findings wherein the six criteria studied in this paper have

the same interpretation and overall results of AGREE with over-all mean score of 5.88.

Table 9: Summary of the Assessment of Respondents in Terms of the Six Criteria of Service Qualities, Customer Attitudes and Brand Preference

Criteria	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Physical Environment Quality	5.89	0.347	Agree
Interactional Quality	5.76	0.432	Agree
Outcome Quality	5.86	0.406	Agree
Utilitarian Attitude	5.95	0.211	Agree
Hedonic Attitude	5.87	0.429	Agree
Brand Preference	5.97	0.305	Agree
Overall Results	5.88	0.355	Agree

Presented in Table 10 is the result of hypothesis testing. The Pearson correlation index of the service quality and customer attitudes attributes towards brand preference was determined. Using MS Excel, the values of r were computed and shown in the table.

The result shows that there is significant relationship in the Interactional Quality and no significant relationship in the Physical Environment Quality and Outcome Quality towards Brand Preference.

A study conducted by Bolton et al. (2014) that service organizations and marketers have focused too much of their energy on their core services performance and too little emphasis on designing a customer journey that enhances the entire customer experience. There is nothing wrong with seeking firms to be competitive in the marketplace. The problem occurs when performance levels and service offerings become too similar within an industry, so that price is the only key competitive weapon that remains. The purpose of the study was to argue that in order to break this dead lock, companies need to focus on the small details that make big differences to customers. It was done by interviews with the executives in successful service organizations. It was provided an analysis of differentiation strategies in diverse service organizations

across consumption contexts, nations and cultures around the world.. The result of the structural equation modeling shows that the quality of the physical environment, food, and service were significant determinants of restaurant image. The restaurant brand was also found to be a

significant antecedent of customer perceived value. In addition, the results reinforced that customer perceived value is indeed a significant determinant of customer satisfaction, and customer satisfaction is a significant predictor of behavioral intentions.

Table 10: Relationships of Service Qualities and Customer Attitudes Towards Brand Preference

<i>Attributes</i>	<i>Pearson r</i>	<i>r Interpretation</i>	<i>Sig</i>	<i>Decision</i>
Physical Environment Quality	-0.007	LOW	0.942	r is not significant
Interactional Quality	0.095	HIGH	0.322	r is significant
Outcome Quality	-0.265	LOW	0.005	r is not significant
Utilitarian Attitude	0.117	HIGH	0.22	r is significant
Hedonic Attitude	0.268	HIGH	0.004	r is significant

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the results presented, the following conclusions and recommendations were drawn by the researcher.

It is concluded that majority of the respondents are group of millennial in the range of 25-39 years old dominated by the pool of male respondents with a leading earning of ₱20,001- ₱30,000 based on the analysis of the profile of respondents. In this note, it is recommended by the researcher to focus more on the pool of millennial since the young ones were the group who really love to eat and dine in the restaurants among other generations. It is recommended as well that the restaurant brand should focus on making marketing analysis and strategy on how to tap female respondents and other generations to increase the market positioning and sales growth of the business most especially the restaurant brand is new market player.

Based on the assessment of the respondents in the six criteria of the study, it is concluded that the following attributes got the lowest rating from the respondents: For Physical Environment Quality, the attribute which got the lowest rating is “This restaurant’s seats are comfortable.” with a mean score of 5.20; for Interactional Quality, the attribute which got the lowest rating is “This restaurant quickly corrects anything that is wrong.” with a mean score 5.07; for Outcome Quality, the attribute which got

the lowest rating is “This restaurant has healthy food.” with a mean score of 5.39; for utilitarian attitude of customer towards restaurant brand, the attribute which got the lowest rating is being “Helpful” and being “Functional” with both mean score of 5.90; for hedonic attitude of the customer toward restaurant brand, the attribute which got the lowest rating is being “Delightful” with a mean score of 5.56 and; for the brand preference, the lowest rating among the given attributes is “This restaurant meets my dining needs better than other comparable casual dining restaurants.” with a mean score of 5.90. In this note, based on the conclusion drawn, the following are being recommended by the researcher. For physical environment quality, it is recommended that the brand restaurant should design comfortable seats for the customers considering this is part of the customer experience in their visit in the brand; for interactional quality, it is recommended should create a strategic formula in handling customer concern and complaints to fill the gap of satisfaction of the customers that will affect the customer behavior and attitudes towards the restaurant brand; for outcome quality, it is recommended that the restaurant brand should revisit their menu line up considering the pool of customers dining in and out the brand since customers nowadays are health conscious; for utilitarian and hedonic attitude of the customers towards restaurant brand, it is recommended that part of delivering customer satisfaction, the restaurant brand should create a training program that will encompasses the competency,

skills and knowledge of the employees to meet customer expectation and satisfaction and; for brand preference, it is recommended to develop a brand standard mechanism framework to be established and followed by all the restaurant employees since the restaurant brand is building name and positioning in the market.

It is also concluded based on the results of the study that there is no significant relationship between the rating of the respondents in the service qualities, customer attitudes and brand preference. In this note, a further study similar to this is being recommended using the comprehensive list of indicators and attributes established in this study however the focus is within other foodservice industry to determine the relationships of service qualities, customer attitudes towards brand preference.

Proposed Brand Standard Mechanism for Pizza Telefono Restaurant

Delivering quality to customers in a competitive marketplace dictates the need to continually enhance a customer's experience and satisfaction. However, evidence indicates that satisfying customers is not enough to retain them because even satisfied customers defect at a high rate in many industries.

Brand preference has become an important area of study with the realization that satisfaction alone does not necessarily ensure key customer behaviors such as loyalty. The foodservice industry needs to explore the combination of good/service attributes that results in an optimal level of customer satisfaction. Alternative customer satisfaction delivery strategies need to be assessed from the perspective of cost/benefits, return on quality, ability of competition to copy a specific strategy, and a firm's ability to deal with raised expectations associated with each strategy.

This research aimed to develop a Brand Standard Mechanism for Pizza Telefono Restaurant that will eventually serve as a guide in achieving the expected experience of the customers and increase brand awareness and branding positioning in the market.

The study depicted brand standard mechanism dimensions that will help the restaurant brand achieve customer brand preference. Thus, this proposed model is significant in

customizing the various customer brand preference model in foodservice industry and becomes a guiding principles among hospitality industry stakeholders.

To depict the schematic model, Fig. 2, presents the proposed Brand Standard Mechanism.

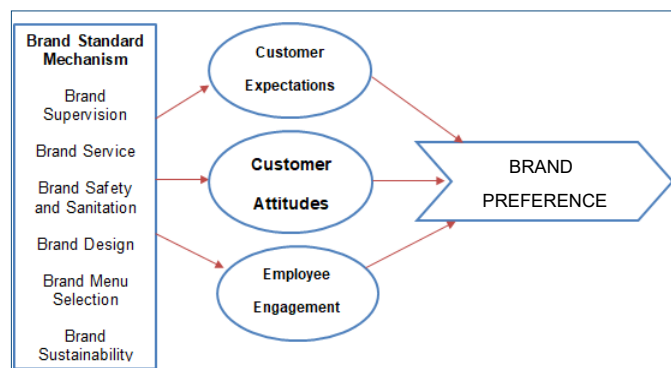


Fig. 2: Proposed Brand Standard Mechanism for Pizza Telefono Restaurant

Framework Explained

The Brand Standard Mechanism in the model represents the standard brand dimensions needed in assessing the brand preference of the customers. The three elements relating to five brand dimensions are customer expectations, customer attitudes and employee engagement can account in achieving brand preference. This proposed Brand Standard Mechanism Model can be appropriate for integrating education and training, aligning both with the needs of the labor market and promoting mobility and transparency for restaurant brands, especially for new players in the market. The model is composed of six brand dimensions namely Brand Supervision, Brand Service, Brand Safety and Sanitation, Brand Design, Brand Menu Selection and Brand Sustainability.

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