

“INVESTIGATION ON CUSTOMER-BASED BRAND EQUITY
IN HYPERMARKET: A CASE STUDY IN IPOH.”

CHENG JAP XEN

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
(CORPORATE MANAGEMENT)

UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN

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“Investigation on Customer-Based Brand Equity in Hypermarket : a
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CHENG JAP XEN

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- (2) No portion of this research project has been submitted in support of any application for any other degree or qualification of this or any other university, or other institutes of learning.
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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to examine and verify the applicability of customer-based brand equity model based on Aaker's well-known brand equity framework from customers' standpoint in the Malaysia's hypermarket industry. Besides, this study is set to distinguish the different dimensions of Aaker's customer-based brand equity model and examine its impact and influence on hypermarket's overall brand equity in Ipoh, Malaysia. It is conceptualized that hypermarket equity is determined by four dimensions-brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality and brand loyalty. Mall intercept method is applied to choose and contact shoppers with the structured questionnaire at the four hypermarkets in Ipoh. A total of 427 valid and useable questionnaires are obtained, wherein responses are recorded on 7 point Likert-type scale, with 1 being strongly disagree and 7 strongly agree. The study revealed that except brand association, all the other three equity dimensions - brand awareness, perceived quality and brand loyalty significantly related to overall hypermarket equity. Among these, brand loyalty is found to be the most influential determinant of overall hypermarket equity. Thus, based on the results, it was confirmed that Aaker's brand equity model is also applicable to the large retailing industry like hypermarkets. Hence, retailers should consider relative importance of these dimensions while evaluating their overall equity. This study is of great interest for large retailers who wish to increase their brands' value proposition to the marketplace.

CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH OVERVIEW

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the research project titled “Investigation On Customer-Based Brand Equity in Hypermarket: A Case Study in Ipoh.” This chapter will begin with the research background followed by problem statement, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study and finally the conclusion.

1.1 Research Background

Over the last decades, Malaysia has registered a robust growth in the retail industry particularly the hypermarkets which has ultimately changed the market structure and nation’s shopping landscape. Hypermarket retailers such as Giant, Tesco, Mydin, Econsave and others have indeed become household names in the mind of Malaysian consumers mainly due to the convenience of having everything under one roof. These transformation have resulted in a significant drop in customers spending and patronage at traditional marts since they are more attracted to modern day retailing concepts – ‘Hypermarkets’ (Morganosky, 1997). Generally, the concept of hypermarket refers to a large retail store that combines a supermarket and a departmental store which offers wide range of products such as groceries, appliances, general merchandise, clothing and others that leads to a one stop shopping experience (Perrigot & Cliquet, 2006). According to Burt (2000), diversity in brands, product labels, price and quality offered by these retail outlets makes a big difference in purchase behavior.

Besides providing employment opportunities, Malaysia’s retailing industry is also a major contributor towards nation’s gross domestic product (GDP) (Kaliappan, Alavi, Abdullah & Zakaullah, 2009). In 1993, Malaysia’s first hypermarket ‘Makro’ was introduced and paved way for new era in retailing industry. Hassan, Sade and Rahman (2013) have indicated that the widespread expansion of hypermarkets are relatively immune to maturity phase and expected to expand continuously throughout Malaysia. These expansions have led to dramatic rise in the competition among rival hypermarkets and high level of brand consolidation in the industry. In

the face of intense competition and price wars between these retail stores, grocers need to explore further to increase their customer-based brand equity to stimulate customer loyalty (Allaway, Huddleston, Whipple & Ellinger, 2011). Ensuring continuous customer satisfaction and customer loyalty would be an absolute necessity for retail firms as loyal customers will generate repeat purchases that ultimately increase the retail outlet's revenue and profitability (Li & Green, 2011). By understanding the importance of this notion, retailers have been taking great efforts by engaging in various brand management exercises in order to increase their customer-based brand equity and to insulate themselves from competitors.

Moreover, retailers also have resorted to undertake various sustainable competitive tactics by focusing on customer needs and wants (Bhukya, 2015). For this, retailers must form great understanding about brand equity from the perspective of consumers (Taskin & Akat, 2010). According to Kim, Kim, Kim, Kim & Kang (2008), customer-based brand equity serves as the most important parameter in determining customer's purchase decision. Kumaravel and Kandasamy (2012) have noted that brand equity is an important instrument for associating a brand and influencing customer's purchase decisions for a particular hypermarket store. Positive hypermarket brand equity does not merely increase the revenue and profitability of the firm but it also provides opportunity for retailers to charge premium prices on certain goods and embark on brand extension strategy knowingly brand switching are less likely among loyal customers (Keller, 1993). Moreover, respective hypermarkets would be able to gain competitive advantage over rival stores and help in their decision making approach should they understand and incorporate the concept of customer-based brand equity.

Hence, it has become a primary importance for marketers to focus on branding of their store. Although there were numerous researches have been devoted over the years to brand equity namely the drivers, models, measurement and definition in particular (Burt, 2000; Pappu, Quester and Cooksey, 2005; Aaker 1991; Keller 1993, 1998), not much focus has been paid to the equity of the retailer as a brand. Thus, the objective of this study is to distinguish the dimensions of well-known customer based brand equity model developed by Aaker (1991) and examine its impact and influence on hypermarket brand equity in Ipoh, Malaysia.

1.2 Problem Statement

The subject matter of customer-based brand equity has been a topic of interests for researchers over the years. According to the Marketing Science Institute (2015), brand equity and brand related issues were one of the most widely studied subject matter among researchers and remain as a top priority area for future studies. Generally, brand equity's definition mainly concerns product brands (Keller 1993; Aaker 1991; Park and Srinivasan 1994) or service brands (Berry 2000) in the business circle. The concept was not developed for retailers initially and remains distinct in accordance to their specific characteristics. Many existing literatures have generally examined the relationship between brand equity and customer's purchase intention on various industries and product categories (Porral, Fernandez, Boga & Mangin, 2015; Lin, Huang & Lin, 2015; Aaker, 1996; Khan, Rahmani, Hoe & Chen, 2014). As for the retail industry, there are relatively very limited number of studies conducted to examine the concept of retailer as a brand or retailer equity as a whole (Jara & Cliquet, 2009; Grewal & Levy, 2012; Chen & Green, 2010).

It has become an interesting subject to explore further especially with the consumers' higher level of exposure and awareness (Pappu, Quester & Cooksey, 2007; Lassar, Mittal & Sharma, 1995). In Malaysia, this concept remains unaddressed and needs to be focused upon since there is a dire need to study how does hypermarket's brand equity drives customers to be loyal to a particular outlet. Most of the available studies on brand equity in retail industry are concerning hypermarket's private labels or store brands. According to Pappu and Quester (2006), the issues on retailer equity has not been extensively studied in the literature due to fewer attempts to measure them. Therefore, this study will address the vacuum left on this subject matter by past literatures in order to differentiate the related components (Brand Awareness, Brand Association, Perceived Quality and Brand Loyalty) by adopting Aaker's brand equity model and examine its impact on hypermarkets in Ipoh, Malaysia from the consumer's perspective in order to have a deeper understanding on key dimensions enhancing retail brand equity. Besides that, this research will also attempt to fill the gaps left behind by past conceptualizations of brand equity by addressing the void and weaknesses of previous literatures. The findings and outcome of this research are believed to yield significant contribution to both academicians and business practitioners.

1.3 Research Objectives

The research objectives in this study can be categorized into general objective and specific objective.

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this research is to distinguish the different dimensions of customer-based brand equity model developed by Aaker (1991) and examine its impact and influence on hypermarket's overall brand equity in Ipoh, Malaysia.

1.3.2 Specific Objective

The specific objectives of this study as per listed below:

- To determine the significant impact of Brand Awareness towards hypermarket's overall brand equity.
- To determine the significant impact of Brand Association towards hypermarket's overall brand equity.
- To determine the significant impact of Perceived Quality towards hypermarket's overall brand equity.
- To determine the significant impact of Brand Loyalty towards hypermarket's overall brand equity.

1.4 Research Questions

This study addresses the following research questions:

- Does Brand Awareness have significant impact towards hypermarket's overall brand equity?

- Does Brand Association have significant impact towards hypermarket's overall brand equity?
- Does Perceived Quality have significant impact towards hypermarket's overall brand equity?
- Does Brand Loyalty have significant impact towards hypermarket's overall brand equity?

1.5 Hypotheses of the Study

The hypotheses of this project are developed from the specific objectives mentioned under sub-topic 1.3.2. The developments of these hypotheses are supported by previous literatures on hypermarket's overall brand equity by using Aaker's customer-based brand equity model (Bhukya, 2015; Pappu & Quester, 2006; Jara & Cliquet, 2009; Chen & Green, 2010; Kumaravel & Kandasamy, 2012).

- H1 = There is a significant positive impact of brand awareness on the overall hypermarket's equity
- H2 = There is a significant positive impact of brand association on the overall hypermarket's equity
- H3 = There is a significant positive impact of perceived quality on the overall hypermarket's equity
- H4 = There is a significant positive impact of brand loyalty on the overall hypermarket's equity.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The completion of this research is expected to significantly contribute to several parties such as;

1.6.1 Marketers

Undoubtedly, the marketers in the retail industry particularly the hypermarkets will enjoy the most benefit, because this research is a behavioral study which designed to investigate the impact of consumer-based brand equity dimensions on consumer's store patronize. The outcome of this research will help marketers to acquire sound knowledge and better understanding in order to improve their marketing and distribution channel activities. By having such vital information, firms would be able to control the activities of their retail outlet in a more precise and effective manner. Besides that, the results will also guide managers to decide on the advertising budget allocation and spending. The study also serves to identify and diagnose the weaknesses of current marketing strategies adopted by the firms that require further improvement. In addition to that, marketers may also use this study as a point of reference in allocating resources and capacities in a more constructive manner.

1.6.2 Researchers

This study intends to serve as a guiding principle or reference point for any aspiring researchers in their future studies. In Malaysia though, there aren't many studies done in the hypermarket industry particularly concerning the concept of customer-based brand equity of the retailer. Hopefully, this research will provide a theoretical contribution in the literature that would further enrich the knowledge and understanding of marketers and consumers' on retail outlet's brand equity. Since academicians over the years have hinted over the potential of this concept, there is a great urgency to initiate more studies. Therefore, this study will generate supportive data about the subject matter, shorten the literature gap and pave way for establishing more similar studies in the near future.

1.6.3 Consumers

The research may help them to evaluate the brand equity of the hypermarkets and provide comprehensive information in the future. By evaluating hypermarket brand equity from different dimensions (Brand Awareness, Brand Association, Perceived Quality and Brand Loyalty), it will certainly provide better understanding in how these retail outlets are being perceived by customers at large which will eventually influence their decision making on store patronage or their purchase intention. New elements which perhaps were unknown or paid less attention previously could emerge from this study and provide a whole new perspective from customer point of view. When credible studies leading to vital information are vastly available, customers would be able to mitigate their risk factors and would help them to make better informed decisions in the future.

1.7 Chapter Layout

Chapter 1 provides a brief introduction of the research topic, which includes a general background on different dimensions of customer-based brand equity model, developed by Aaker (1991) and examine its impact and influence on hypermarket's overall brand equity in Ipoh, Malaysia. Problem statement, research objectives, research questions, hypotheses and significance of study are included in this chapter as well. In chapter 2, this chapter provides a literature review that is related to the research topic and framework. The variables of the research will be discussed in this chapter. Besides, this chapter is also considered as a basis for the testing of the hypotheses formed.

For chapter 3, it focuses on the methodology of the research. This chapter shows the way of conducting the research by including the details of the research setting. This chapter contains the research sample, data collection method, measurement scales and methods of analyzing data. Chapter four contains the results obtained from the survey. In this chapter, all the data that are obtained from the survey will be analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. The results are presented in a table form. The final chapter which is chapter 5 consists of the discussion of the research results. Recommendations and implications for future research

will be included in this chapter. Next, limitations of the research also will be discussed. In addition, a brief summary of the whole thesis is also included.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter presents an overview of this research and provides preliminary understanding of the subject matter being tested upon. Research background and problem statement are first discussed, followed by the research objective, research questions and significance of study. Therefore, the content of this chapter will serve as basis and foundation for further exploration in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to review the literatures which relate to the area of customer-based brand equity, brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty. The theory of customer-based brand equity by (Aaker, 1991) will be used as the basis to test the hypotheses formed. Other relevant theories and models are also introduced in order to provide better insights and deeper understanding about the research topic. Besides that, conceptual framework for this study will also be constructed and finally the development of the hypotheses.

2.1 Review of the Literature

This chapter will engage in reviewing the past literature critically and related theories to the topic of this study. This literature review will help to understand the subject more clearly.

2.1.1 Hypermarket

In general, the definition of 'hypermarket' is still very much ambiguous and unclear till date. Public at large including researchers and academicians are still perplexed over this term and often refer hypermarket to supermarkets or shopping malls. Thus, this has prompted questions on how to distinguish between them. Hypermarket can be perceived as a modern day retailing concept that combines a supermarket and a departmental store which offers wide range of assortment and products levels with a floor space of between 2,500 square meters to over 8,000 square meters in size (Hassan, Sade & Rahman, 2013).

According to Perrigot and Cliquet (2006), the most essential principle of hypermarket is basically works under the concept of having "Everything under the same roof" in which consists features such as having a large floor space, large parking lot with wide assortment of product categories. Most of the products sold at hypermarkets are from a fast moving consumable

product category such as groceries. Besides that, it also offers other products range such as home appliances, general merchandise, clothing and others that leads to a one stop shopping experience (Perrigot & Cliquet, 2006). Fascinating features such as modern display format, large floor space, wide array and large quantity of products have enrich customer experience and have significantly added value to hypermarkets (Business Monitor International, 2007). The layout design of the hypermarket also consists of many sub-retailers who rent the space within the premise. In 1993, Malaysia's first hypermarket 'Makro' was introduced and paved way for new era in retailing industry. Besides providing employment opportunities to many, it was also noted that one of the major contributing sectors in Malaysia's foreign direct investment inflow (FDI) is from the wholesale and retail in which hypermarkets make up a major portion (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2015).

2.1.2 Customer-Based Brand Equity

Generally, academicians have taken two distinct perspectives and principal to study brand equity concept – customer based approach and financial approach. The financial perspective of brand equity concerns on the asset value of the evaluated brand (Simon & Sullivan, 1990; Farquhar, Han & Ijiri, 1991). The customer based perspective however is basically the evaluation of customer's responses towards a particular brand (Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1991; Shocker, Srivastave & Reukert, 1994). According to Aaker (1991), customer-based brand equity can be defined as the value customers associate themselves with a brand using a set of dimensions such as brand association, perceived quality, brand awareness, and brand loyalty. Aaker also describe brand equity as a set of assets or liabilities and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by products or services.

As per Aaker's claim that these four dimensions as the most important dimensions to measure brand equity from a customer's perspective, some empirical evidence also supports this notion and describe these four distinct dimensions as a brand equity measurement tool. Washburn and Plank (2002) have stated that elements such as customer's familiarity, knowledge and associations towards a specific brand define the essentials of customer-based brand equity theory. On the same note, Keller (1993) also mentioned that the subject of customer-based brand

equity is rather a differential effect of brand knowledge and the response of consumer towards marketing. It is also can be defined as the prefix of attribute levels measurement in an objective way so that it helps to distinguish between multi attributed preferences and the overall brand performance subjected to the aspects of quality, choice and intention (Park & Srinivasan, 1994; Agarwal & Rao, 1996). The proponent contend for a particular brand of product/services to be deemed as valuable or brings value, it has to be valued by customers and no the marketers. However, none of the other definitions would be meaningful if the brand has no meaning or add value to the customers (Cobb-Walgren & Donthu, 1995).

Strong brands have greater tendency in increasing the trust level among consumers for intangible products by helping customers to visualize better and form greater understanding in making informed decisions. This can significantly reduce customers' perceived risks particularly monetary, safety and social risks in making a purchase decision in which evaluation process with the availability of vast brand choices could be a great challenge. In this regard, it was found that high level of brand equity could ultimately increases the degree of customers' satisfaction, repeat purchase intention and brand loyalty towards product/services (Berry, 2000; Kim et al, 2008). According to Eldem and Swait (1998), brand equity was described as an "added value" in relation to a certain brand (name, design, symbol or mark) in which the given brand is capable to endow a product (something that offers functional benefit) and allows the brand to charge premium price. In the retail sector, multi-channeling or m-tailing concept as a results of rapid expansion offer new considerations on the applicability and the adaptability of overall retail brand equity management (Grewal & Levy, 2009).

In the context of this research, the pertinent question that arises would be how customer-based brand equity theory applicable to retail brands itself particularly the hypermarket brand. Contrasting to the classical brand equity approach in which a particular brand endows a product or service, the retailer or the hypermarkets endows their outlet and its offerings of products/services as brand equity in a very specific set up of atmosphere that eventually leads to a wholesome shopping experience to customers (Verhoef, Lemon, Parasuraman, Roggeveen, Tsiros & Schlesinger, 2009; Grewal & Levy, 2009). Similarly, Ailawadi and Keller (2004) also found that retailers like hypermarket also enjoy brand equity just like any other product/services

because they capitalize on the value of their retail outlet's name and stand as a genuine brand themselves. In doing so, hypermarket must leverage on its in-store atmosphere, price positioning, merchandising and selection of specific brands and products which part of brand equity sub dimensions. In a meta-analysis study by Pan and Zinkhan (2006), customers' store choices are identified to be strongly driven by determinants such as store image, store atmosphere, location, convenient parking facilities, product quality and product assortment, which are connected to brand equity dimensions. Some would argue that these are merely drivers of brand equity and not the dimensions; however drivers are factors that leading to the brand equity dimensions and hence part of overall brand equity theory conceptualization. Interestingly, location factor is found to be no longer a significant factor in choosing a store as customers are willing incur additional costs and sacrifice other resources such as time and energy in an effort to patronize their favorite retail outlet even if it is located farther away than competitor store (Ailawadi, 2001). Retail store's success is largely depending on its effort and sincerity by utilizing its resources and capabilities to fulfill customers' needs and expectations. The ultimate aim here is to generate satisfaction and enhance customer loyalty and not to increase customer's costs (Corstjens & Lal, 2000).

Basically, the more resources and capacities a hypermarket possesses to attract customers to their store, the higher the retailer's customer-based brand equity. These criteria are generally well received, valued and appreciated differently by patron of the outlet (Baltas, Argouslidis & Skarmeas, 2010). In addition, customers could be loyal to a particular hypermarket and to take additional effort at the expense of time and money in order to patronize for its long opening hours providing convenience to at their ease of time, or for its low price strategy, or for the assortment quality. According to Keller (2010), one weakness that often associated with the conceptualization of brand equity theory is inefficiency to demonstrate retailers brand equity on the basis of low price strategy. He further argued that many leading retailers in the world are operating squarely on low price positioning strategy.

However, it does not indicate that they do not have equity since they charge low prices. One mechanism to conceptualize their equity would be in terms of resources premium at the expense of consumers in order to shop with them. Although resources could reflect financial aspect but

there are also other pertinent factors such as brand preferences compromised, distance traveled or services foregone. This weakness could be addressed with a strategy to imply store image cues. Consequently, low price retailers could also fit into the brand equity paradigm allowing higher retailer equity. It also important to note that, customers do not only patron retail store to buy groceries and other products but they also visit the outlet to satisfy their hedonic and social needs such as entertainment value, self-expression and as an exploration avenue to spend quality time (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Babin, Darden & Griffin, 1994; Chandon, Wansink & Laurent, 2000).

2.1.3 Brand Awareness

Throughout all the researches done on brand equity concept, brand awareness is undoubtedly one of the key dimensions specified in most of the studies on brand equity (Krishnan, 1996; Aaker, 1991; Mackay, 2001; Keller, 1992; Na, Marshal & Keller, 1999; Agarwal & Rao, 1996). Brand awareness could be described as the customers' ability to identify, recognize and recall a particular brand under various circumstances by associating the brand, image, symbol, logo and other elements into memory (Keller, 2003). In contrast, Aaker (1991) has stated that criteria such as brand knowledge, brand dominance, top of mind and brand opinion are the essence of forming brand awareness in consumers' mind. The level of noticeability and awareness a brand can achieve in the marketplace will influence its brand equity.

Therefore, if a brand can attain higher level of awareness, the likelihood of the products related to that brand being purchased is high as well (Nedungadi, 1990). Brand awareness is very important in influencing customer's buying decisions as they are generally driven by heuristic elements like "choose the brand they know" or buy the brand they have heard of" which subsequently leads to purchasing well established brands (Keller, 1993). There are two sub-dimensions of brand awareness single out by Keller (1993) which comprises of 'brand recognition' and 'brand recall'. Keller also stated that brand recognition is a very important factor in forming brand communication strategies by firm to help communicate the product attributes to targeted customers which will eventually allow them to be associated with the products until the brand name gets recognized in the eyes of consumers. Furthermore, it can also

help customers in their buying decisions as they could identify a brand name from other rival brands (Percy & Rossiter, 1992). As the brand gets hold building greater awareness and recognition from consumers, it will become a launch pad to boost its market share and enhance its brand image further among existing and potential consumers (Grewal, Krishnan, Baker & Borin, 1998).

Thus, the above could also be applicable to retailer in which a retailer brand with a higher level of brand awareness among consumers will most certainly enjoy greater brand equity. Moreover, brand awareness also can be perceived as a sign of commitment in an effort to familiarize customers with a specific brand and helping them in point of consideration (Aaker, 1991). The studies on brand awareness dimension are mainly concerning its impact on product / services brand choices as revealed in a study by Hoyer and Brown (1990) in which they found consumers with high level of brand awareness have significantly high tendency to buy high quality brands as their first choice compared with consumers with no brand awareness. Moreover, brand awareness also can be considered to be functioning as a cue to brand revival in terms of brand choices (Holden, 1993). From the perspective consumer-based brand equity, unaided recall and familiarity were used as a measurement tool by Agarwal and Rao (1996) in which they found that the recall measure is somehow not convergent with other brand equity measurement however familiarity aspect does proved to be in line and consistent.

In addition, other emerging issues such as brand awareness sources in relation to brand awareness dimension and its overall underlying structure have considerable effect on consumers' purchase intention and purchase behavior however there seems to be little attention paid to this in the literatures (Laurent, Kapferer & Roussel, 1995; Bird & Ehrenberg, 1966). This dimension was included in the studies conducted by Yoo and Donthu (2001) but the findings resulted in no significant direct effect on brand equity concept.

2.1.4 Brand Association

Aaker (1991) has defined brand association as anything linked in consumers' thought process and memory in relation to a brand which believed to bring value and meaning to them. The brand

association dimension of brand equity model viewed from all forms of attributes in reflection of a product or any independent aspects of the product itself (Chen, 2001). Keller (1993) has stated that three major aspects could be derived from the dimension of brand associations specifically under brand image which are the benefits, attributes and attitudes. Generally, brand image is formed by a set of associations that are usually developed and organized in a very peculiar way that help provide meaning and value to both firm and customers. Besides helping to create a positive feeling, brand association also plays an important role in helping customers to process or retrieve information, identify brand differentiation and provide reasons to make purchase. Krishnan (1996) has stated that any link or association exists between ‘informational’ and ‘brand’ will most likely contribute in developing brand association in consumers mind.

Another type of brand association that exists mainly revolves around brand attitudes as mentioned by Keller (1993) in which overall evaluation of a specific brand by consumers can help nurture brand attitude (Wilkie, 1986). In making brand choices, a brand attitude of consumers’ plays a very important role in their purchase decision making. In a study by Laroche, Kim and Zhou (1996), it was found that attitude towards a focal brand does have positive relationship with purchase intentions. Besides that, it also forms a basis for firms in deciding to adopt brand extension policy as part of its marketing strategy (Aaker, 1996). Moreover, the concept of customer-based brand equity usually works with customers holding some unique, strong and favorable brand associations in their mind as a result of having greater awareness. According to Kotler and Keller (2006), elements such as brand related thoughts, attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, experiences, images, feelings and anything others that could be linked in memory of consumers can be defined as having brand associations.

In another study on customer-based brand equity model by Netemeyer, Krishnan, Pullig, Wang, Yagci and Dean (2004), the primary brand equity dimension detected is brand uniqueness and whereas the related brand equity dimensions are such as popularity, brand awareness, organizational associations, familiarity and brand image. On the other hand, when it involves a corporate brand or when brands tend to have similar features and attributes, the more appropriate core brand association dimension would be “organizational associations” as the particular organizations’ business philosophy lies within its brand association (Aaker, 1996). Brand

associations is also related to the symbolic and functional beliefs derived from brand image which based on the argument that customers also make product purchase that signifies the image it carries, wealth, power, sophistication in order to gain identification and connection with other users or social groups that uses similar brand (Evans, Foxall, & Jamal, 2006). As for the retailers, retailers distinct marketing activities could also form specific associations in the mind of consumers which will can be considered to be related positively with store patronage and purchase intentions (Keller, 1998). Thus, if the associations linked to a particular retailer are positive in nature from consumers' perspective, the probability of the customer buying from that store will be significantly increased as well. Moreover, a study by Grewal et al (1998) have further reaffirm this argument that there is indeed positive relationship between a retailer's image and customer's purchase intentions.

2.1.5 Perceived Quality

From the perspective of this study, another component from brand equity model to be tested is perceived quality. According to Aaker (1991), perceived quality can be classified as an important dimension under the brand equity model. It could also be categorized as an element of yet another brand equity dimension – brand associations in which components such as brand attitude, brand image and perceived quality can form as multi-dimensions proposition (Low & Lamb Jr, 2000). According to Aaker (1991), customer's overall perception and evaluation on a specific product's level of quality in connection with its intended objective relative to availability of alternatives can best described the term perceived quality. Similarly Zeithaml (1988) and Keller (2001) also subscribed to the same definition as per Aaker's with an important note that perceived quality is the first element that will form perception on consumers' mind.

Therefore, the dimension of perceived quality could have some conceptualization differences in terms of manufacturing quality, product based quality or the objective quality (Aaker, 1991). He further stated that perceived quality can generates value particularly in the context of price premium, reason to buy, differentiation position, brand extension and channel member interest. Besides that, Dick, Jain and Richardson (1995) have indicated that the dimension of perceived quality does have positive effect on the confidence level of making buying decisions. It also

capable of significantly adds value to the overall brand equity in customers' purchase processes (Low et al, 2000). Moreover, Li, Monroe and Chan (1994) also have concluded that perceived quality to be positively correlated with purchase intention through perceived value of a particular brand name. Brand quality is therefore an essential aspect in the buying process of consumers since their satisfaction level is very much depending on purchasing a product that perceived to be of high quality (Grewal et al (1998). Further to that, they have concluded that if a particular brand of product is perceived to be high in quality, it will most likely increase the likelihood of customer's willingness to purchase and found support.

From the perspective of this study, product quality and service quality would be a crucial measurement to assess the perceived quality dimension associated with the retailers particularly the hypermarkets. A study by Jinfeng and Zhilong (2009) has found that high perceived quality on retailer will influence the purchase decisions of consumers and their store selection. Consumers would opt for high perceived quality store rather than other rival stores. Perceived quality has been increasingly gaining attention and recognition from marketer across the globe in various product groups. Firms have long recognized the importance of perceived quality and incorporated it into its marketing related decisions (Pappu et al, 2006). In addition to that, Kotler (1991) has indicated that there is an intimate connection exists between variables such as customer satisfaction level, service quality of the firm and the profitability of the company. Based on the above descriptions, the relationship of customers' perceived quality and hypermarkets' overall brand equity will be tested upon in this study.

2.1.6 Brand Loyalty

Over the years, brand loyalty has been studied extensively by researchers and marketers which have enriched the marketing literature (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Generally, customers have high tendency to be attracted to new brands in the markets and would like to try them out however, there is no indication that they will continue to stick with that brand in the future. In order to make customers stick with that particular brand as their preferred choice, brand loyalty has to play its role. Oliver (1999) has defined the term brand loyalty as a continuous commitment to repurchase or revisit a particular product or service in a very consistent manner, thereby

leading to repetitive purchase of the same preferred brand despite various marketing efforts by competing firms and other situational factors that could potentially cause a change in attitude and switch brand. Similarly, when a focal brand adjusts its pricing or makes any changes to its product features, there is a likelihood that customers may resort to brand switching (Aaker, 1991). According to Wernerfelt (1991), customers will only consider themselves to be loyal to certain brands if they could associate positively with that brand. Brand loyalty could classify into two different dimensions – behavioral loyalty and attitudinal loyalty.

Behavioral loyalty is also known as purchase loyalty and described as having a constant repeat purchase pattern on a particular brand of product/service (Chaudhuri et al, 2001). On the other hand, the term attitudinal brand loyalty described as customers having a dispositional commitment to a particular brand that offers specific values and uniqueness which prompted them to be associated with that brand (Chaudhuri et al, 2001). Nevertheless, Aaker (1991) has defined brand loyalty consists of many classification groups such as ‘likes the brand, committed buyer, habitual buyer, satisfied buyer with switching costs, switchers, and’. Maintaining high level of brand loyalty among consumers are crucial for firms as it can potentially increase its market share and sustain its revenue inflow with customers’ repeat purchase behavior.

Besides that, it can also leads to positive word of mouth from existing customers (Dick & Basu, 1994). Aaker (1991) has further pointed that brand loyalty is basically act as a firm’s strategic asset in which it is capable to create value and becomes an advantage to the firm. The mentioned advantage and values of brand loyalty are able to lower the costs of marketing, able to attract new customers, able to trade leverage and act as a response to competitive threats. Thus, brand loyalty is undoubtedly a crucial aspect of brand equity which can increase customers’ purchase intention. In a study by Tellis (1988), it was found that the strongest determinant of customers’ buying behavior is indeed brand loyalty. Moreover, Broyles, Schumann and Leingpibul (2009) also concluded that there is a substantial positive influence and direct effect of behavioral loyalty to customers’ willingness to make a purchase. Adding to that, it was also found that one additional brand loyal purchase leads to increase in percentage hike in the purchase probability which signifies a positive correlation with brand loyalty dimension and customer’s purchase intention (Pan et al, 2006).

In the context of retail sector, brand loyalty can be described as customers' loyalty towards a specific retail outlet or hypermarket as a result of its' superior product quality or service quality (Pappu et al, 2006) and customers' intention to make purchase as primary choice from that particular store (Yoo et al, 2001). Therefore, it can be summarized that the above literatures suggested that higher retailer equity should be able to generate higher level of customers' purchase intention. Besides that, it can also be noted that, customers may remain loyal to a particular retail store if they have positive prior experience with that outlet regardless of their inclination of brand loyalty (Karayalcin, 2010). Based on the above descriptions, the relationship of retailer's brand loyalty dimension and hypermarkets' overall brand equity will be tested upon in this study.

2.2 Review of Relevant Theoretical Models

There are several brand equity models that have been studied by researchers and academicians over the years. One of the most frequently cited brand equity models is the one developed by Aaker (1991), which has been empirically tested countless times in the past literatures (Yoo, Donthu & Lee, 2000; Kim & Kim, 2004; Atilgan, Aksoy & Akinici, 2005). This model also can be utilized in the retail context by getting the grips of the brand equity concept and attain valuable information particularly the relationships of its various dimensions towards the brand performance. Besides that, the model also provides clues on the indicators of a firm's branding policies.

Therefore using Aaker's brand equity model, this study aims to retest the specified dimensions and measurement criteria of customer-based brand equity in the hope to determine its impact on overall hypermarket equity and store selection in Ipoh, Perak. For the purpose of this study, four components; "Brand Awareness, Brand Association, Perceived Quality and Brand Loyalty" listed in Aaker (1991) brand equity model will be tested. The study will exclude "other proprietary assets" component of the brand equity model since it is irrelevant to the context of this study. Figure 1 shows the brand equity model constructed by Aaker (1991).

2.2.1 Aaker's Brand Equity Model

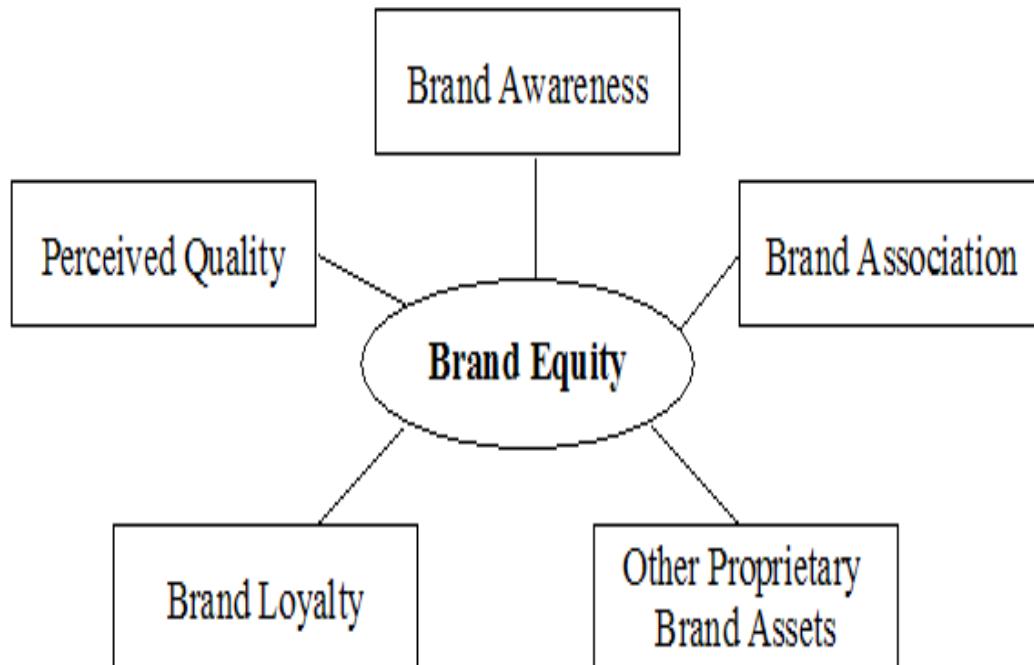


Figure 1: Brand Equity Model (source: Aaker, 1991)

Brand Awareness: The dimension of brand awareness is a crucial measurement criterion in the study of brand equity. It can be described as the extent to which a brand has reached out to the consumers and public at large. The ability to recognize or recall a particular brand name by consumers is the focal point of this dimension. Enhancing brand awareness of a particular product / service is largely depending on how strong the brand name is and associations that could be formed in the mind of consumers. Customers' familiarity and preference towards a brand can lead to building positive attitude towards it.

Besides that, Aaker (1991) also noted that consumers tend to talk more about a brand and spread positive word of mouth if they really like it. Aaker also described high brand awareness signifies customers' commitment towards the brand and provides assurance to businesses. It is also fairly important to note that marketers strive to enact their brand name to be part of consumer's evoked

set of brands in order to create more awareness. Therefore, this study will relate this dimension in the context of retail sector and use it as measurement to investigate its impact on overall retailer equity.

Brand Association: According to Aaker's brand equity model, there are few indicators available from the marketing perspective to assess a particular brand of product/service in relation to its associations triggered. One of the indicators of brand association component is to understand the extent to which a particular brand can gain consumers' associations towards it resulting from advertisement exposure. With the heightening competition among rival firms, the ability to create 'brand differentiation' in the consumers' mind has become a priority for marketers in which brand associations play a crucial role in developing it.

Aaker also indicated that higher brand association will lead to higher overall brand equity by having high influence on customers' purchasing behavior and buying process. Besides that, it also indicates the role play by brand awareness in developing positive attitude towards a brand. Brand extension is yet another indicator specified by Aaker in the brand association dimension in which there will be greater opportunities to enhance brand associations if brand extension is vastly available in the market. Therefore, this study will relate this dimension in the context of retail sector and use it as measurement to investigate its impact on overall retailer equity.

Perceived Quality: The dimension of perceived quality is also an important measurement criterion in determining equity level of a brand. Aaker (1991) has described the dimension of perceived quality underlines the extent to which a brand name is perceived by consumers in carrying quality products/services under its banner. One of the criteria to measure perceived quality is a brand must provide enough reason to consumers to purchase it. Secondly, the brand must contain differentiation elements or attributes that stand out from rival brands which will help develop positive feeling towards the brand.

Besides that, Aaker also has stated that price can be considered as a quality indicator especially when buying involves a complex assessment process and customer's status is at stake. The element of 'availability' also has great level of influence in brand perception in the eyes of

consumers in which widely available products through various sales channels are deemed to have high in quality. Finally, Aaker also explained the importance of line extension as high number of brand extension provides an indication that the brand name contains some quality guarantee which allows the brand to grow on a wide spectrum. Thus, this has given enough reason to adopt this component in this study to investigate its impact on overall retailer equity.

Brand Loyalty: Aaker's (1991) brand equity model also reaffirms the importance of having brand loyalty, in which it can be considered as the ultimate goal of businesses. Brand loyalty revolves around the extent to which consumers are able to remain loyal to a particular brand name. There are a number of factors to look upon in relation to brand loyalty. Firstly, it is always less costly to maintain loyal customers than investing heavily on marketing activities to lure new customers. Moreover, loyal customers tend to provide trade leverage for firms as they ensure firms in generating stable stream of revenue. The model also provide insights on how loyal customers plays a very important role in attracting new client base by enhancing brand awareness through positive 'word of mouth' with family and friends.

This serves as an added value for firms by allocating its resources better and avoids unnecessary spending on advertisement. Besides that, brand loyalty also helps firm in reducing threat factors from other competitors in the market. Marketers are fully aware that loyal customers will not switch brands quickly and this advantage provides additional response time for firms to take counter measures in order to address threats posed by competitors in the market. Thus, this study aims to incorporate this dimension and reevaluate its applicability in the retail industry to determine its significance level on overall equity of a retailer.

2.2.1 Keller's Brand Equity Pyramid

Keller's (2003) customer-based brand equity model is yet another popular model used by researchers and business practitioners all over the world. According to Keller (2003), this in-depth model has addressed the weaknesses and discrepancies of previous researches on brand equity. This model depicts the element of brand added value or differential that leads to the forming of customers' brand knowledge and their responses towards a brand name. Keller's brand equity model contains a sequence of four steps in effort to build strong brand, with the completion of one step will lead to another. These steps are illustrated clearly in customer-based brand pyramid (Figure 2). There are a total of six dimensions of brand equity in this model consists of (brand salience, brand performance, brand imagery, consumer judgements, consumer feelings and brand resonance. When the top of the pyramid is attained (brand resonance dimension), it resemble brand equity at the highest level.

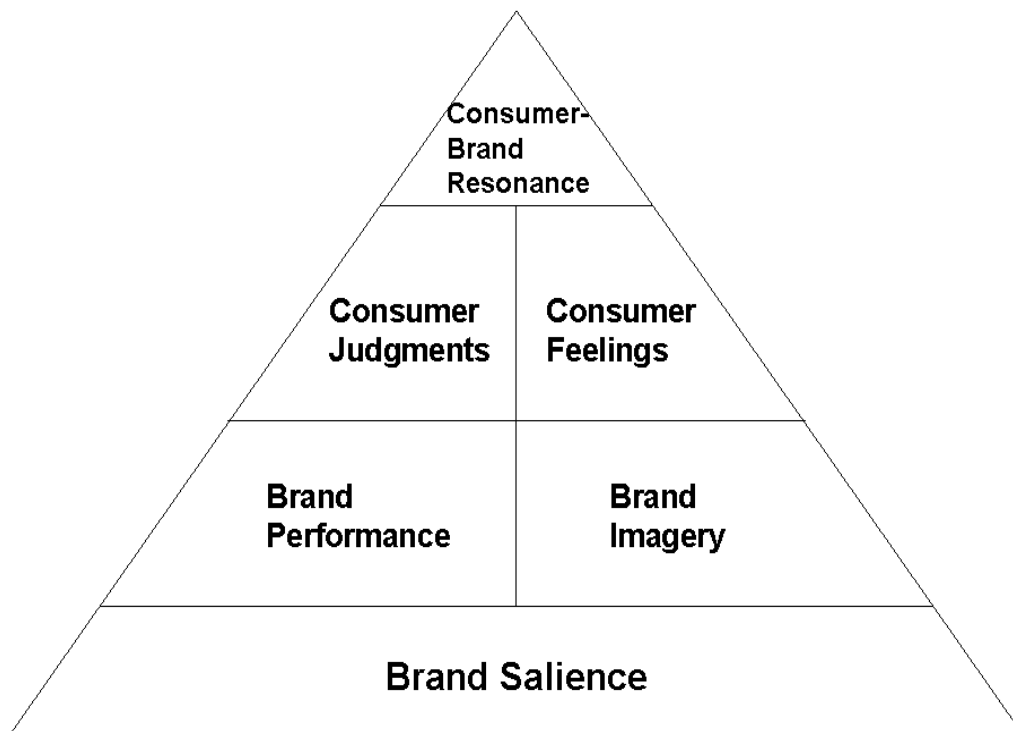


Figure 2: Consumer-Based Brand Equity Pyramid (source: Keller, 2003)

Brand Salience: Development of brand saliency in consumers' mind is the first effort of developing high value in brands in Keller's consumer-based brand pyramid. It refers to the aspects of brand awareness in which top-of mind awareness, strength of brand and brand retrievability as the main focus area. Generally a brand with high saliency is the outcome of great amount of brand awareness. Firms have to establish a clear link or association between a brand and a particular product category in the mind of the consumer. However, having brand awareness alone may not be sufficient enough to entice customers to make purchase. Instead, it becomes a launch pad in creating the meaning and value of the particular brand in the mind of the customers. Therefore, this dimension act as a precondition set for moving up further on the Keller's brand equity pyramid.

Brand performance and Brand Imagery: Upon attaining the first level (brand salience), the process moves to next step in which it will emphasize on meeting or exceeding customers' needs such as their functional need, social needs and psychological needs. Enhancement of overall brand equity is largely depending on the roles played by both brand performance and brand image aspects. Brand performance can be raised by delivering product or service that fulfills their needs, followed by firm's attempts to exceed the expectation level of consumers. On the other hand, brand imagery dimension can be boosted by personalized to consumers' psycho-social needs through direct method of brand experience or indirect method like advertising. In terms of brand imagery, customers are mainly concern about the value and meaning a brand brings and not so much on the product functionality. The outcome of these dimensions could be the initial indicators for firms in pursuant of brand loyalty.

Consumer Judgements and Consumer Feelings: According to Keller (2003), the third step of this brand pyramid is to elicit customers' responses to the efforts from step two in the form of judgement and feelings towards a particular brand name. Consumer judgement can be defined as the cognitive evaluation of the many aspects of the brand such as the credibility, quality and the overall superiority of a specific brand name by forming a certain opinion or attitude towards it. Consumer feelings are basically the emotional reactions of a particular brand. What emotional reaction does the brand evoke in the consumers' mind and their social surroundings? These positive / negative feelings can be very strong in influencing consumer's purchase decision and

even their post purchase behavior during observational stage of actual product usage. Therefore, consumer judgements and consumer feelings tend to have significant influence on consumers' relationship and level of identification towards a brand name of a product / service. Besides, the same components may also have some implications on other consumers.

Brand Resonance: The final step of Keller's brand equity model takes place when all the requirements and conditions of step three are met, and with the understanding that the consumer has obtained a positive image of the brand name using rational and emotional consideration. Basically, this final step provides clues on whether a consumer is willing to engage into a relationship with the brand. If the answer is yes, then the firm has achieved true brand loyalty from consumers. By reaching to this level, firms are rest assured that there will be continuous repeat purchase from loyal customers. Besides that, it may also help a firm to reduce threat and susceptibility from competitors. Firms also may opt for price premium strategy having known the fact that loyal customers would not switch brands easily. Therefore, brand resonance reflects the ultimate bonding between a brand and a customer.

2.3 Proposed Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between brand equity dimensions towards overall hypermarket equity leading to hypermarket store selection. Customer-based brand equity model by Aaker (1991) will be used as a theory to support this study and as the foundation to develop the proposed conceptual framework. Since this model has been proven to be reliable in previous studies, it will be adopted in this study as well to determine the significance level of the independent variables towards the dependent variable. Although it has yielded positive results in other industry previously, however it is important to see the outcome in retail industry concerning the hypermarkets.

Consumer-based brand equity model by Aaker (1991) will be measured using four dimensions consist of brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty. A conceptual framework has been developed which is presented in (Figure 3). By developing this conceptual framework, the relationship between the dimensions are illustrated and summarized clearly. On the left side of the framework, four dimensions of brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty (independent variables) are shown. These variables will have a positive impact on the overall hypermarket equity (dependent variable) from a consumers' perspective which will lead to hypermarket store selection.

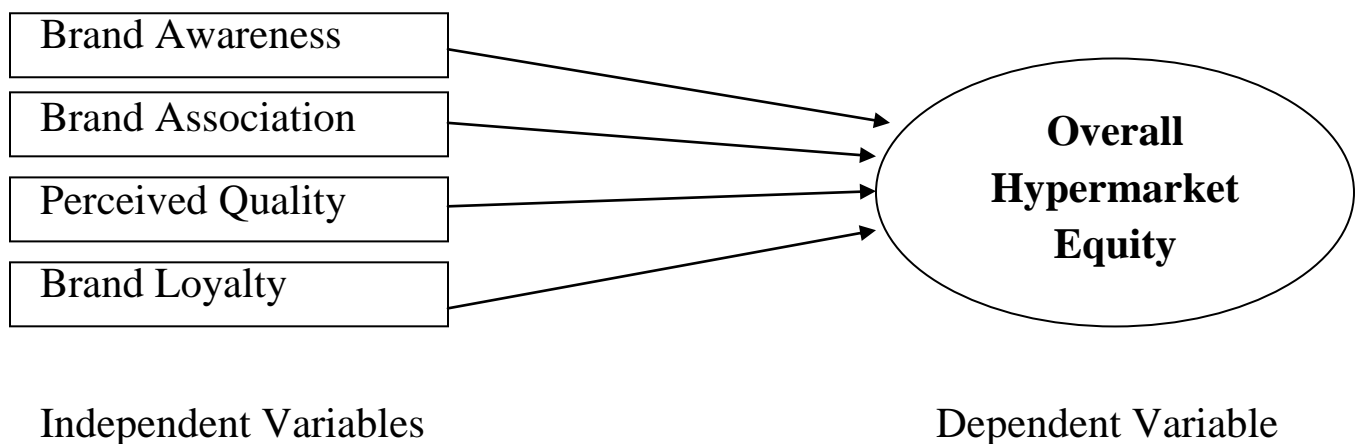


Figure 3: Conceptual Framework

2.4 Hypotheses Development

According to the conceptual framework, the following four hypotheses for this research are constructed as follows:

- H1 = There is a significant positive impact of brand awareness on the overall hypermarket's equity.
- H2 = There is a significant positive impact of brand association on the overall hypermarket's equity.
- H3 = There is a significant positive impact of perceived quality on the overall hypermarket's equity
- H4 = There is a significant positive impact of brand loyalty on the overall hypermarket's equity

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has included the literature reviews of both the independent variables and dependent variable. In addition to that, this chapter also discussed about the theoretical models developed by the researchers and summary of past empirical studies conducted. Finally as a guideline to this research, a conceptual framework and hypotheses were developed.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to explain the process flow in conducting this research, from research design, to data collection methods, sampling design, research instrument, constructs measurement, data processing, and data analysis. By defining the research methods in a clear and systematic manner, the research would be more organized and the mistakes could be minimized, which may prove to be critical to the entire study.

3.1 Research Design

Basically, the nature of this research is a causal research and the purpose of this research is to identify, determine, and indicate the cause-and-effect relationships between independent variables and dependent variables. To be precise, this research is being conducted to investigate the relationship of Aaker's (1991) brand equity dimensions (brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty) towards overall hypermarket's equity that leads to hypermarket store selection. Therefore, this study determines to find out the strength of these relationships and how great the influence is to a consumer. This research will be carried out using survey method by distributing questionnaires to the targeted respondents. Besides that, the study is also based on reviewing previous researches and theoretical models. As results, four hypotheses are developed.

Therefore deductive approach is appropriate to apply in this circumstance. Furthermore, the study collects empirical data (primary data) by conducting questionnaire in order to test the existing theory. From this perspective, deductive approach is supported and fulfills the requirement. Quantitative research is chosen as the approach for this study due to the fact that quantification in the data collection and data analysis is involved. Moreover, instead of gaining in-depth insights of the subject matter, the main focus of this study is to test the hypotheses derived from the theoretical model. The relationship between brand equity dimensions and

overall hypermarket equity will be determined in this study. Based on these justifications, quantitative approach is more suitable.

3.2 Data Collection Method

In this study, primary data was obtained in order to construct the research model and to design the questionnaires. The questionnaire was designed to measure the intensity and the impact level of brand equity variables; ‘brand awareness’, ‘brand association’, ‘perceived quality’ and ‘brand loyalty’ against the ‘overall hypermarket equity’. Since this study is pertaining to the hypermarkets, four hypermarkets located around Ipoh were chosen to collect the data. The hypermarkets involved are Tesco (Station 18), Giant (Bercham), Mydin (Meru) and Econsave (Jalan Kampar). The respondents will be requested to fill up the questionnaire (self-administered) and to return it back immediately to the researcher. The nature of this study falls under cross-sectional type in which the data are collected only once for the purpose of data analysis. A total of 427 set of questionnaires were distributed and collected. The survey was conducted from 7th November 2015 until 15th November 2015.

3.3 Sampling Design

Sampling is the process of selecting enough number of elements in a defined population and so that results from analyzing the sample are generalizable to the population. There are 5 steps involved in the sampling design which include determining the target population, setting sampling frame and location, deciding the sampling elements, selecting sampling technique and determining the sampling size of respondents.

3.3.1 Target Population

Due to the budget limitations and time constraint, the target population for this research is the residents in Ipoh, Malaysia. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2010), the population in Ipoh were 657,892 residents in year 2010, with 249,853 were Malay, 290,165 were

Chinese, 92,587 were Indian, and 25,287 were belongs to others ethnic groups. Therefore, this study will use this data as the population size.

3.3.2 Sampling Frame and Sampling Location

The list comprising of all the residents in Ipoh is could not be obtained at the Department of Statistic Malaysia, Ipoh. Hence, non-probability techniques will be applied for this study. The sampling locations are the hypermarkets that are situated in Ipoh, i.e. Tesco (Station 18), Giant (Bercham), Mydin (Meru) and Econsave (Jalan Kampar).

3.3.3 Sampling Elements

For the purpose of this study, the selected respondents are patrons of hypermarket store in Ipoh. The focus will be largely on the patrons who are above 18 years old. The reason behind this is that those who are above 18 years old generally have higher maturity level that impacts the accuracy level of the study (Ahmad & Judhi, 2010). Furthermore, these groups of people have more spending power, able to evaluate things better and higher capability in making informed decisions on their own.

3.3.4 Sampling Technique

In general, probability sampling would always be an ideal choice because the population has equal chance to be chosen as respondents. However in this study, probability sampling cannot be carried out because the (1) sampling frame of the population size is unknown, and (2) the distribution of the population of the study does not follow a specific pattern. As a result, non-probability was employed. Nevertheless, the targeted population was carefully selected to reduce the occurrence of sampling error. In this research, judgment sampling technique was used in selecting appropriate sample.

3.3.5 Sampling Size

For the purpose of this research, the sample size will be based on Yamane recommended the formula for random sample size as shown in below:

Yamane formula;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where n is the sample size, N is the population size, and e is the level of precision (as cited in Israel, 1992).

Therefore the sample size for this study is:

$$n = \frac{657892}{1 + 657892(0.05^2)}$$

$$n = 400$$

With N = 657892, e = 5% (the confidence level at 95%), then the sample size has to be minimum 400. Therefore, this study has undertaken a sample size of 427 respondents to have a better representation of the population.

3.4 Research Instrument

In this study, the determinant-choice questionnaire (Refer Appendix 1) was developed and used. This will allow the respondents to choose the existing alternatives instead of providing new opinions. The advantage of having this type of questionnaire is respondents will spend less time to answer and also feel easier to answer. In this way, it will ensure the relevance of the study easy compilation of data analysis thereafter. In addition, the background / demographic

information will be gathered after the constructs measurement in order to avoid embarrassment or feel of threat to respondents. The constructs measurement are started from independent variables (brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty) and followed by dependant variable (overall hypermarket equity).

3.5 Construct Measurement (Scale and Operational Definitions)

The questionnaire is divided into two sections, i.e. Section A and Section B. Section A measures consumer-based brand equity dimensions (independent variables) and overall hypermarket equity (dependent variable). Consumer-based brand equity dimensions are measured by adopting Aaker's (1991) scale, i.e. brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty. The sources adopted for the above mentioned scales are explained below.

Brand Awareness is measured by adopting questions from Aaker (1991) and Yoo et al (2000). It consists of questions like 'When I see this store, some characteristics of this store come to mind quickly' and 'I can recognize this store quickly among other competitor stores'.

Brand Association is measured by adopting questions from Aaker (1991); Keller (1993) and Pappu et al (2005). Some of the questions used in this scale are 'Comparing to competitor store, this store has a very unique image', 'I respect and admire people who buy at this store' and 'I like the brand image of this store'.

Perceived Quality is measured by adopting questions from Aaker (1991) and Pappu et al (2005). The questions in this dimension consists of 'I trust the quality of products available at this store', 'This store offer products with excellent features' and 'Buying products from this store would be of very good quality'.

Brand Loyalty is measured by adopting questions from Yoo et al (2000) and Pappu et al (2005). Some of the questions in this dimension are 'If the required product is not available at this store, I would not go and buy it from competitor store', 'I consider myself to be loyal to this store' and 'This store would be my first choice'.

Overall Retailer Equity is measured by adopting questions from Yoo et al (2000). The questions consists of ‘Even if another competitor store has the same features as this store, I would still prefer to buy at this store’ and ‘Even if another competitor store has the same price as this store, I would still buy at this store’.

3.6 Data Processing

The collected questionnaires will be checked and screened thoroughly before run the data analysis. The researcher shall edit, manipulate or delete the data if the respondents are found to have provided inconsistency rating. For example, the respondent rates strongly agree for first attribute, but rates strongly disagree for second attribute which under the same variable (both are same directional questions). Data coding involved assigning a code for each response of the questions respectively. Codes formulated are simple and easy. For instance, gender of respondents can be assigned as “1” for male and “2” for female. Coding enables easier interpretation of data as compare to lengthy alphabetical descriptions. Coded data will be transcribed onto the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software’s database system.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data collected through questionnaires will be examined by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. SPSS software helps the researcher to convert the raw data into useful information. In this research, SPSS software will be used to analyse descriptive analysis, scale measurement, and inferential analysis.

3.7.1 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis was used to determine the respondents’ demographic profiles such as gender, age, race, occupation, and education level were analyzed by using the frequency

distribution. For example, the collected data showed 33% and 29% of the respondents is aged within 28 to 37 and aged within 38 to 47. The data also showed that the lowest aged groups of customers visiting the hypermarkets are below 18 years old which makes up to 9 %. The study has found that most of the patrons to hypermarkets are female consumers representing 67.8% of the total respondents. Male respondents only make up to 37.2% of the study.

3.7.2 Reliability Analysis

The reliability test is a process to indicate the correlation among items, scale, or attributes as well as to test the consistency of respondents in answering of each set variables (brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, brand loyalty and overall hypermarket equity). The reliability is measured by Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. According to Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2010), a reliability score of exceeding 0.6 can be consider as achieving good internal consistency. However, Nunnally (1978) suggested that the acceptable value of Cronbach's Alpha should be greater than 0.7. In this study, the reliability scales of each variables have scored higher than 0.7 thus indicating that the items or attributes used to measure each independent and dependent variables have complied with the requirement by Nunnally (1978).

3.7.3 Inferential Analysis

Throughout the entire research, inferential analysis is the most important analysis to be carried out in order to answer the research questions and hypotheses made. In order to test the causal impact caused by the independent variables (IV) on the dependent variable (DV), it is useful to determine whether the relationships between the IVs and DV do exist priory. This can be done by using Pearson Correlation test. After confirming the relationships, a subsequent test – Multiple Linear Regression – was carried out to check the level of strength that had caused by each IV on the change of DV. Furthermore, multiple regression analysis will also be used to justify the hypotheses, either accepted or rejected; it also can be used to identify the dominant factors in the independent variables by examining the strength of Beta coefficient.

3.8 Conclusion

Chapter 3 discussed about the methodologies adopted to conduct a business research. The research design, data collection method, sampling design, research instrument, constructs measurement, data processing and methods of data analysis that applied in this study were outlined clearly in this chapter. The next chapter will be discussing about the data analysis in which all the data were obtained through methodologies specified in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

A total of 427 questionnaires had been distributed, completed, and collected for data analyzing. The collected data showed 33% and 29% of the respondents is aged within 28 to 37 and aged within 38 to 47. This finding reflects the largest customer segment group that patronized hypermarkets to fulfill their shopping needs. The data also showed that the lowest aged groups of customers visiting the hypermarkets are below 18 years old which makes up to 9 %. (Refer Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Frequency distribution based on respondents' age profiles

| Respondents' range of age | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| < 18 | 37 | 9 % |
| 18 – 27 | 64 | 15 % |
| 28 – 37 | 142 | 33 % |
| 38 – 47 | 126 | 29 % |
| > 47 | 58 | 14 % |
| | <u>427</u> | <u>100 %</u> |

4.1 Reliability

The reliability scales of each variable have scored higher than 0.7 (Refer Table 4.2). The results indicate that the items or attributes used to measure each independent and dependent variables have complied with the requirement by Nunnally (1978). In another word, the reliability test of this research is fairly consistent with past studies; the respondents are able to understand the

questions well and able to evaluate the items in the questionnaire clearly without facing much difficulty.

Table 4.2: Reliability Scores of Each Independent and Dependent Variables

| Variables | Cronbach's Alpha | No. of Items |
|-------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Brand Awareness | 0.796 | 3 |
| Brand Association | 0.840 | 4 |
| Perceived Quality | 0.955 | 3 |
| Brand Loyalty | 0.963 | 3 |
| Overall Retailer Equity | 0.792 | 3 |

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

4.2.1 Respondent Demographic Profiles

The study has found that most of the patrons to hypermarkets are female consumers representing 67.8% of the total respondents. Male respondents only make up to 37.2% of the study. One of the reason for lower response level among male consumers are mainly because they have higher tendency to shy away of responding to the survey as compared to female respondents. Most of the respondents were Chinese with 45.4% and followed by Malay with 26.5%. This could be explained by the location of the hypermarkets which are situated at the Chinese majority area. The distribution of education level attained by respondents was quite fairly distributed and this implies that the respondents, irrespective of their current education status is or potential patrons of hypermarket store. As large number of respondents were categorized in “other” employment status, it is wise to break down the occupation in more details in future study (See Table 4.3).

Table 4.3: The Frequencies of Respondents' Demographic Profiles

| Demographic Profile | | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------|---|--------------------------|------------|
| Gender: | Male | 159 | 37.2 % |
| | Female | 268 | 67.8 % |
| Race: | Malay | 113 | 26.5 % |
| | Chinese | 194 | 45.4 % |
| | Indian | 72 | 16.9 % |
| | Others | 48 | 11.2 % |
| | Education Level: | Below SPM | 43 |
| Level: | SPM | 74 | 17.3 % |
| | Diploma | 102 | 23.9 % |
| | Bachelor's Degree | 166 | 38.9 % |
| | Master's Degree and Above | 42 | 9.8 % |
| Occupation: | Clerical | 82 | 19.2 % |
| | Supervisor/Executive/Middle Management | 171 | 40.0 % |
| | Managerial | 78 | 18.3 % |
| | Others | 96 | 22.5 % |

4.2.2 Central Tendencies Measurement of Constructs

Table 4.4: Central of Tendency for Brand Awareness

| | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---------|---------|------|--------------------|
| Store characteristics come to my mind quickly | 2 | 7 | 4.42 | 1.241 |
| Able to recognize the store among competitors | 3 | 7 | 5.46 | 0.988 |
| Familiar with the store brand | 1 | 7 | 4.86 | 1.062 |

(Table 4.4) provides information on the average mean score of each item for ‘Brand Awareness’ dimension and the standard deviation values. Achieving mean score of above 5.00 (the neutral point) indicated that respondents strongly agreed that brand awareness is one of the factors for consumers’ hypermarket store selection. In this case, ‘ability to recognize the store among competitors’ attained mean score higher than 5.00. The lowest mean score attained by ‘store characteristics come to mind quickly’ with a mean of 4.42.

Table 4.5: Central of Tendency for Brand Association

| | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|------|--------------------|
| This store has a unique brand image | 1 | 6 | 3.42 | 1.375 |
| I respect and admire people who | 1 | 6 | 3.12 | 1.352 |

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|------|-------|
| buy from this store | | | | |
| I like the brand image of this store | 1 | 7 | 3.74 | 1.325 |
| Like and trust the products made by this store | 1 | 6 | 3.43 | 1.364 |

As compared to ‘Brand Awareness’, the items or attributes of ‘Brand Association’ scored relatively lower mean value and higher standard deviation (See Table 4.5). No distinctive difference is observed between the means scored by each items of “Brand Association” and thereby, this study concludes that the items taken from past studies are able to measure the respondents’ brand association on the hypermarket brand equity and store selection.

Table 4.6: Central of Tendency for Perceived Quality

| | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--|---------|---------|------|--------------------|
| I trust the product quality of this store | 1 | 7 | 4.07 | 1.301 |
| Buying products from this store would be of good quality | 1 | 7 | 4.07 | 1.301 |
| This store offer products with excellent features | 1 | 7 | 4.08 | 1.299 |

In comparison with ‘Brand Association’, the items or attributes of ‘Perceived Quality’ scored relatively higher mean value and lower standard deviation, which cumulatively confirmed the

cronbach's alpha high value of the variable (See Table 4.6). No distinctive difference is observed between the means scored by each items of "Perceived Quality" and thereby, this study concludes that the items taken from past studies are able to measure the respondents' perceived quality on the hypermarket brand equity and store selection.

Table 4.7: Central of Tendency for Brand Loyalty

| | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--|---------|---------|------|--------------------|
| I will not buy from other store even if required product not available at this store | 1 | 7 | 3.99 | 1.555 |
| I am loyal to this store | 1 | 7 | 3.99 | 1.555 |
| This store would be my first choice | 1 | 7 | 4.34 | 1.573 |

According to (Table 4.7), attribute 'I will not buy from other store even if required product not available at this store' is ranked the highest with the mean score of 4.34 and the standard deviation of 1.573 whereas item 'I am loyal to this store' and 'This store would be my first choice' are followed by with the same mean score of 3.99 and standard deviation of 1.555. Thereby, this study concludes that the items taken from past studies are able to measure the respondents' brand loyalty on the hypermarket brand equity and store selection.

Table 4.8: Central of Tendency for Overall Retailer Equity

| | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--|---------|---------|------|--------------------|
| I would still prefer to buy at this store even if other stores have similar features | 1 | 7 | 3.99 | 1.555 |
| Even if other store is no difference from this store, it seems smarter to purchase from this store | 1 | 7 | 3.59 | 1.397 |
| Even if another store has the same price, I would still prefer to buy at this store | 1 | 6 | 3.11 | 1.297 |

(Table 4.8) provides information on the average mean score of each item for ‘Overall Retailer Equity’ dimension and the standard deviation values. According to this finding, the highest mean was scored by attribute ‘I would still prefer to buy at this store even if other stores have similar features’ and the standard deviation of 1.555 whereas item ‘Even if another store has the same price, I would still prefer to buy at this store’ has the lowest mean score of 3.11 and standard deviation of 1.297. The result is also a further testament of the high cronbach’s alpha value for this dimension.

4.3 Inferential Analysis

4.3.1 Pearson Correlation Scores

Pearson Correlation Coefficient is used to determine the strength of linear relationship between independent variables and dependent variables of this study. Basically it means that it is used to determine the strength of the relationships between brand awareness, brand association,

perceived quality and brand loyalty against overall hypermarket brand equity and hypermarket store selection. (Table 4.9 and Table 4.10) showed that the relationships of three tested independent variables (Brand Awareness, Perceived Quality and Brand Loyalty) were significantly related to dependent variable with all three independent variables obtained p-value lower than alpha value 0.05.

However, independent variable (Brand Association) does not have significant relationship to the dependent variable as its p-value is above 0.05 alpha value. The correlation strength of dimensions (brand awareness, perceived quality and brand loyalty) are relatively within ± 0.21 to ± 0.40 indicating a definite relationship. However, dimension (Brand Association) indicates correlation strength level within ± 0.00 to ± 0.20 which implies that this dimension is very little in strength and can be ignored. Interestingly, the study also revealed dimension ‘Brand Awareness’ has a negative relationship towards dependent variable. Overall, the results indicate a potential for improvement in this area. Therefore, the results of this study will be a reference point for future studies to identify further on the causal implications of these independent variables towards the dependent variable.

Table 4.9: Pearson Correlation Scores between Independent Variables and Dependent Variable.

| | Brand Awareness | Brand Association | Perceived Quality | Brand Loyalty |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Pearson Correlation | | | | |
| with dependent variable: Overall | | | | |
| Retailer Equity | - 0.207 | 0.077 | 0.281 | 0.295 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 | 0.114 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| N | 427 | 427 | 427 | 427 |

Table 4.10: Pearson Correlation Coefficient

| | | Overall Retailer Quality, DV | Brand Awareness, IV1 | Brand Association_ IV2 | Perceived Quality_IV3 | Brand Loyalty, IV4 |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Overall Retailer Quality, DV | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -.207** | .077 | .281** | .295** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | .114 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 427 | 427 | 427 | 427 | 427 |
| Brand Awareness, IV1 | Pearson Correlation | -.207** | 1 | -.203** | .049 | -.136** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | | .000 | .317 | .005 |
| | N | 427 | 427 | 427 | 427 | 427 |
| Brand Association_IV 2 | Pearson Correlation | .077 | -.203** | 1 | .186** | .497** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .114 | .000 | | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 427 | 427 | 427 | 427 | 427 |
| Perceived Quality_IV3 | Pearson Correlation | .281** | .049 | .186** | 1 | .369** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .317 | .000 | | .000 |
| | N | 427 | 427 | 427 | 427 | 427 |
| Brand Loyalty, IV4 | Pearson Correlation | .295** | -.136** | .497** | .369** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .005 | .000 | .000 | |
| | N | 427 | 427 | 427 | 427 | 427 |

4.3.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

In this research, this statistical tool is used to determine the relationship between brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty against the overall equity of hypermarket. (Table 4.11) showed that 17% of the change in the dependent variable: ‘Overall Hypermarket Equity’, can be explained by the 3 independent variables – ‘Brand Awareness’, ‘Perceived Quality’ and ‘Brand Loyalty’. Overall, the statistical significance of the fourth regression model is acceptable, F-value = 21.605 ($p < 0.05$) (see the ANOVA Table below). The table provided the important figures to establish a regression formula that can describe the relationship and the strength of association between each independent variables and dependent variable, i.e.

$$Y = 3.427 - 0.255 X_1 - 0.154 X_2 + 0.209 X_3 + 0.212 X_4$$

Whereby, Y = Overall Hypermarket Equity

X_1 = Brand Awareness

X_2 = Brand Association

X_3 = Perceived Quality

X_4 = Brand Loyalty

The above equation shows that independent variable “Brand Awareness” has the highest causal impact of the change in dependent variable (Overall Hypermarket equity), followed by “Brand Loyalty”. The third and fourth variables would be “Perceived Quality” and “Brand Association”.

Table 4.11: Multiple Regression Results

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square |
|-------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | 0.295 | 0.087 | 0.085 |
| 2 | 0.348 | 0.121 | 0.117 |
| 3 | 0.397 | 0.157 | 0.151 |
| 4 | 0.412 | 0.170 | 0.162 |

ANOVA

| | Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|-------|
| 1 | Regression | 41.385 | 1 | 41.385 | 40.438 | .000b |
| | Residual | 434.953 | 425 | 1.023 | | |
| | Total | 476.338 | 426 | | | |
| 2 | Regression | 57.745 | 2 | 28.872 | 29.245 | .000c |
| | Residual | 418.594 | 424 | 0.987 | | |
| | Total | 476.338 | 426 | | | |
| 3 | Regression | 74.900 | 3 | 24.967 | 26.308 | .000d |
| | Residual | 401.438 | 423 | 0.949 | | |
| | Total | 476.338 | 426 | | | |
| 4 | Regression | 80.967 | 4 | 20.242 | 21.605 | .000e |
| | Residual | 395.371 | 422 | 0.937 | | |
| | Total | 476.338 | 426 | | | |

COEFFICIENTS^a

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | |
|-------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|--------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 2.432 | .184 | | 13.221 | .000 |
| | Brand Loyalty, IV4 | .251 | .039 | .295 | 6.359 | .000 |
| 2 | (Constant) | 1.940 | .217 | | 8.924 | .000 |
| | Brand Loyalty, IV4 | .188 | .042 | .221 | 4.513 | .000 |
| | Perceived Quality_IV3 | .186 | .046 | .199 | 4.071 | .000 |
| 3 | (Constant) | 2.970 | .323 | | 9.204 | .000 |
| | Brand Loyalty, IV4 | .159 | .041 | .187 | 3.834 | .000 |
| | Perceived Quality_IV3 | .207 | .045 | .221 | 4.584 | .000 |
| | Brand Awareness, IV1 | -.233 | .055 | -.193 | -4.252 | .000 |
| 4 | (Constant) | 3.427 | .367 | | 9.326 | .000 |
| | Brand Loyalty, IV4 | .212 | .046 | .249 | 4.591 | .000 |
| | Perceived Quality_IV3 | .209 | .045 | .224 | 4.664 | .000 |
| | Brand Awareness, IV1 | -.255 | .055 | -.211 | -4.630 | .000 |
| | Brand Association_IV2 | -.154 | .060 | -.132 | -2.545 | .011 |

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter will serve as a summary for this entire study by providing the essential parts of the statistical findings and validation of the hypotheses. Besides that, theoretical and managerial implications will be discussed along with the limitation of this research and its recommendation for future research.

5.1 Summary of Statistical Analysis

In this study, reliability test using Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability of the 16 items constructed to evaluate the 4 independent variables (Brand Awareness, Brand Association, Perceived Quality, and Brand Loyalty) and dependent variable (Overall Hypermarket Equity). The reliability test shows that the items used to measure each independent and dependent variable are highly reliable and this is consistent with the past studies' findings. The reliability scores also imply that the respondents are able to understand the questions well and able to evaluate the items in the questionnaire clearly without facing much difficulty. Besides that, the Pearson correlation test showed that the relationships of three tested independent variables (Brand Awareness, Perceived Quality and Brand Loyalty) were significantly related to dependent variable however, another independent variable (Brand Association) does not have significant relationship to the dependent variable.

The three variables found to be significant (brand awareness, perceived quality and brand loyalty) have attained a correlation strength that signifies a definite relationship. Interestingly, the study also revealed dimension 'Brand Awareness' has a negative relationship towards the dependent variable. This implies that when brand awareness is high, the overall hypermarket equity is low and doesn't play a role in hypermarket store selection. There is a possibility of spreading of negative news that could be detrimental to the hypermarket which leads to this phenomenon. The study has also found that independent variable "Brand Awareness" has the

highest causal impact of the change in the dependent variable (Overall Hypermarket equity), followed by “Brand Loyalty”, “Perceived Quality” and “Brand Association”. No multicollinearity issue was found in this research.

5.2 Discussions on Major Findings

This section demonstrates the relationships of brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty towards overall hypermarket brand equity and hypermarket store selection from consumers’ perspective in Ipoh, Perak. (See Table 5.1)

Table 5.1: Summary of hypotheses testing

| <u>Hypotheses</u> | <u>Results</u> | <u>Supported or not supported</u> |
|--|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| H1: There is a significant positive impact of brand awareness on hypermarket’s overall brand equity. | P<0.05 | Supported |
| H2: There is a significant positive impact of brand association on hypermarket’s overall brand equity. | P>0.05 | Not Supported |
| H3: There is a significant positive impact of perceived quality on hypermarket’s overall brand equity. | P<0.05 | Supported |
| H4: There is a significant positive impact of brand loyalty on hypermarket’s overall brand equity. | P<0.05 | Supported |

The summary of hypothesis testing found that a total of three hypotheses are supported due to p-value below 0.05. The dimensions related these supported hypotheses are brand awareness, perceived quality and brand loyalty. Among the four independent variables, ‘Brand Awareness’ is found to have the highest causal impact on the dependent variable. The dimension of brand association is found to be insignificant as its p-value is above 0.05 and thus does not support the hypotheses. Therefore, it can be noted that hypermarket’s overall brand equity is significantly influenced by brand awareness, brand loyalty and perceived quality. These three dimensions are

found to be of great importance to consumers.

This results of this study coincide with studies by Yoo et al (2000) in which it was found that brand awareness have positive impact on retailers' equity. Therefore, this finding is yet another further testament on the importance of brand awareness as they tend to have significant impact on consumers' mind. A hypermarket's equity could be determined by brand awareness. As such, it important for big retailers like hypermarket to improve on its marketing activities on various scales. In some occasions, any negative news about the firm could also lead to consumer's awareness level which will cause negative reaction towards the brand. The study also found a positive correlation between perceived quality and hypermarket's overall brand equity. This result supports the evidence from previous studies undertaken by Li et al (1994); Jinfeng et al (2009); Erenkol and Duygun (2010) in which perceived quality has a positive impact towards brand equity. The hypermarket must pay a close attention to how is the retail outlets' quality level being perceived by consumers.

According to Aaker (1991), customer's overall perception and evaluation on a specific product's level of quality in connection with its intended objective relative to availability of alternatives can best described the term perceived quality. In addition, the result of this study also supports hypotheses 4 in which stated that brand loyalty has a positive impact towards hypermarkets' overall brand equity. The results from this dimension is also in line with past literatures by Tellis (1988); Pan et al (2006); Pappu et al (2006) in which brand loyalty is positively correlated with brand equity from various industries. Therefore, hypermarkets need to engage more in loyalty programmes to enrich customers' shopping experience with them. Aaker (1991) has also stated that brand loyalty able to reduce marketing costs, able to attract new customers by creating awareness, able to trade leverage and act as a response to competitive threats. Hence, this study has confirmed that Aaker's brand equity model can be applicable to hypermarkets too.

5.3 Managerial Implications

As managerial implications, managers should concentrate on improving its brand equity level especially the dimensions of brand awareness, brand loyalty and perceived quality which were found to be significance in this research. For example; personalized marketing activities and events need to be carried out in a continuous manner to retain the existing customers as part of rewards for their loyalty towards the store. By continuously monitoring of hypermarket equity and related marketing activities, managers would have better insights and understandings in this subject matter which will be helpful in estimating their efforts in the long run. On the same note, this study also has theoretical implication as the concept of consumer-based brand equity was validated in a relatively new to Malaysia's hypermarket arena which is one of South-East Asia's fast emerging countries. Therefore, the findings and results obtained in this research will be useful for hypermarkets or retailers, who aim to attain high level of brand equity from consumers' perspective in the hope to enhance their foothold in the market and boost their profits. In conclusion, consumer-based brand equity is an essential part of hypermarkets to further enhance their revenues.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

In this study, the statements or propositions shown in the questionnaire to measure each variables' items were adopted from past studies such as Aaker (1991); Yoo et al (2000); Keller (1993); Pappu et al (2005). Furthermore, most of the past studies supported the used of the original statements by displaying high reliability and validity scores. As the statements are highly reliable and valid, pilot test was not carried out to test the suitability of the sentence structures to our potential respondents. Nevertheless, the results showed that the author might need to consider restructuring of independent variables. The issue of getting accurate responses from respondents is always a debatable issue in any survey. To lessen the issue, the study was conducted by distributing questionnaires in which face-to-face interviews were held and respondents were requested fill in the questionnaire immediately. On top of that, the facilitators were trained to facilitate the respondents in answering the questionnaire should any query raised by the respondent. Conducting a census survey is always better than sampling survey. In spite of

time constraints and financial limitations, the study was conducted in a best possible way in Ipoh, Perak by gathering the data from four prominent hypermarkets; Tesco, Giant, Mydin and Econsave. Thus, the results cannot be generalized and represent Malaysia as a whole and other nationalities. As the concept of consumer-based brand equity may have differential elements across nations and countries, the findings may not be applicable to other countries due to differences in cultures and economic status.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

In order to get a more comprehensive, detailed and conclusive outcome, it is highly recommended of this study to be conducted in other parts of Malaysia as well. For a better generalization, researchers may focus their studies on multi-regions by expanding coverage to wider range of age group and geographical area to acquire different perspectives. On the other hand, increasing the total sample size could examine the hypotheses in a better way if this research is to be repeated in future. This study's adopted analytical tools are the most common ones in the context of the study. It is recommended that new research to be undertaken using qualitative and other analytical tools for a more diverse and exhaustive finding and to build results viable enough to challenge the currently adopted best practices.

On the other hand, future researchers also encouraged to use a variety of methods to collect data rather than focusing on written questionnaire alone. The alternatives includes face to face interview, videotape of interview session, observation, group discussion with detailed evaluation question and so on. Furthermore, future researchers are suggested to construct their questionnaire carefully to avoid biased questionnaire in order to obtain valuable information. Besides that, it is also recommended that other variables such as environmental factors to be incorporated in the future studies. Researchers also may study the equity concept extensively and include other sub dimensions of equity such as 'brand personality'.

5.6 Conclusion

In this research, a total of four independent variables (Brand Awareness, Brand Association, Perceived Quality and Brand Loyalty) were used to determine the impact on dependent variable (hypermarket's overall brand equity) in Ipoh, Perak. Dimensions such as brand awareness, perceived quality and brand loyalty are found to have significant relationship with hypermarkets' equity. Based on the coefficient value, perceived value and brand loyalty are positively related towards the dependent variable. Both descriptive analysis and inferential analysis were summarized and discussed in this chapter. Besides, managerial implications and limitation were also discussed, and recommendations were provided for future research.

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UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN

(Appendix 1)

ACADEMIC YEAR 2014/2015

(OCT 2015 TRIMESTER)

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (CORPORATE MANAGEMENT)

MBBC 29906 FINAL YEAR PROJECT

**Topic: “ Investigation on Customer-Based Brand Equity in Hypermarket :
a case study in Ipoh.”**

Survey Questionnaire

Dear respondents,

I am a postgraduate student from Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). The purpose of this survey is to investigate the factors that affecting overall hypermarket’s equity that leads to hypermarket store selection. Thank you for your cooperation and participation. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Instructions:

- 1) There are TWO (2) sections in this questionnaire. Please answer ALL questions in ALL sections.
- 2) Completion of this form will take you less than 10 minutes.
- 3) The contents of this questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential.
- 4) Please be informed that in accordance with Personal Data Protection Act 2010 (“PDPA”) which came into force on 15 November 2013, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (“UTAR”) is hereby bound to make notice and require consent in relation to collection, recording, storage, usage and retention of personal information.

Acknowledgement of Notice

[] I have been notified by you and that I hereby understood, consented and agreed per UTAR notice (refer at back)

[] I disagree, my personal data will not be processed.

PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION STATEMENT

Please be informed that in accordance with Personal Data Protection Act 2010 (“PDPA”) which came into force on 15 November 2013, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (“UTAR”) is hereby bound to make notice and require consent in relation to collection, recording, storage, usage and retention of personal information.

Notice:

1. The purposes for which your personal data may be used are inclusive but not limited to:-
 - For assessment of any application to UTAR
 - For processing any benefits and services
 - For communication purposes
 - For advertorial and news
 - For general administration and record purposes
 - For enhancing the value of education
 - For educational and related purposes consequential to UTAR
 - For the purpose of our corporate governance
 - For consideration as a guarantor for UTAR staff/ student applying for his/her scholarship/ study loan
2. Your personal data may be transferred and/or disclosed to third party and/or UTAR collaborative partners including but not limited to the respective and appointed outsourcing agents for purpose of fulfilling our obligations to you in respect of the purposes and all such other purposes that are related to the purposes and also in providing integrated services, maintaining and storing records. Your data may be shared when required by laws and when disclosure is necessary to comply with applicable laws.
3. Any personal information retained by UTAR shall be destroyed and/or deleted in accordance with our retention policy applicable for us in the event such information is no longer required.
4. UTAR is committed in ensuring the confidentiality, protection, security and accuracy of your personal information made available to us and it has been our ongoing strict policy to ensure that your personal information is accurate, complete, not misleading and updated. UTAR would also ensure that your personal data shall not be used for political and commercial purposes.

Consent:

1. By submitting this form you hereby authorise and consent to us processing (including disclosing) your personal data and any updates of your information, for the purposes and/or for any other purposes related to the purpose.
2. If you do not consent or subsequently withdraw your consent to the processing and disclosure of your personal data, UTAR will not be able to fulfill our obligations or to contact you or to assist you in respect of the purposes and/or for any other purposes related to the purpose.

3. You may access and update your personal data by writing to me at japxen@gmail.com

Questionnaires

Section A

Please indicate your response by circling the right number based on the scale given below:

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neutral | Slightly Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Brand Awareness

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | When I see this store, some characteristics of this store come to my mind quickly. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2 | I can recognize this store quickly among other competing brand stores. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3 | I am familiar with this store brand. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Brand Association

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Comparing to competing brand stores, this store has a very unique brand image. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2 | I respect and admire people who buy at this store. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3 | I like the brand image of this store. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4 | I like and trust the products made by this store. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Perceived Quality

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I trust the quality of products available at this store. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2 | Buying products from this store would be of very good quality | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3 | This store offer products with excellent features | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Brand Loyalty:

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | If the required product is not available at this store, I would not go and buy it from other stores. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2 | I consider myself to be loyal to this store. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3 | This store would be my first choice. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Overall Retailer Equity:

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Even if another brand store has the same features as this store, I would still prefer to buy at this store. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2 | If another brand store is not different from this store in any way, it seems smarter to purchase at this store. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3 | Even if another brand store has the same price as this store, I would still buy at this store. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Section B: General Questions

Please select one option from each of the following questions:

1. Gender:

- A) Male
- B) Female

2. Race:

- A) Chinese
- B) Malay
- C) Indian
- D) Other

3. Age:

- A) Below 18years old
- B) 18 – 27 years old
- C) 28 – 37 years old
- D) 38 – 47 years old
- E) Above 47 years old

4. Marital Status:

- A) Single
- B) Married

5. The highest academic qualification:

- A) Below SPM
- B) SPM
- C) Diploma
- D) Bachelor Degree
- E) Master Degree and above

6. Current Occupation:

- A) Clerical
- B) Supervisor/Executive/Middle Management
- C) Managerial
- D) Others

7. Monthly income:

- A) Less than RM1,500
- B) RM1,501 – RM3,000
- C) RM3,001 – RM5,000
- D) RM5,001 – RM7,000
- E) Above RM7,000

