

# A Study of Subway Marketing 4P Strategy

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to examine Subway marketing 4P strategy as the competition in the fast-food industry is extremely high. Subway is needed to keep on striving for better performances to build existing customer loyalty while attracting new customers. Therefore, we examine Subway marketing 4P (product, price, promotion, and place) to ensure that Subway can obtain a competitive advantage in the marketplace. The study used primary and secondary data methods to collect respondents' perceptions of Subway performances. The findings indicated that marketing 4P strategies are the important prediction of the success of the company.

**Keywords:** Competitive Advantage, Customer Loyalty, Fast-Food Industry, Marketing 4P Strategy, Respondents' Perception, Subway

**INTRODUCTION**

Subway has started with submarine sandwiches for more than 50 years. It committed to serving fresh, affordable, and healthy sandwiches to customers. Nowadays, Subway has expanded its business globally offering a variety of products such as submarine sandwiches, salads, snacks, and side drinks. However, the main product of Subway is the submarine sandwich. It offered two sizes of sandwiches, 6-inch and 12-inch, with a variety of flavors such as Meatball Marinara, Spicy Italian, Tuna, Steak, and Cheese. Due to different customers having different tastes, Subway served various types of bread, veggies, and sauces. Although it often launches different flavors of products, Subway also tries to strictly abide by and adheres to its own special formula ensuring customers enjoy the same quality of products and services all over the world.

Subway also offers specific products in different regions to meet local customers' needs, such as Sichuan Flavored Chili Chicken Sandwich or Flatizza in China, and halal products in Muslim-majorities countries like Malaysia and Pakistan. India's first Subway restaurant was established in 2001 in New Delhi. To follow Hindu beliefs, Subway's restaurants do not provide any beef products in India. Besides that, the large number of vegetarians in the country has prompted Subway's Indian branch to provide more types of vegetarian products like Veggie Delite and Veg Shammi, two favorite choices among vegetarians in India. Subway has also opened fully vegetarian restaurants in India. A certain branch of Subway also offers breakfast meals, such as sandwiches of baked fruit, eggs, and sausage. It also sells individual pizzas with the slogan of "heating in less than

90 seconds” as a promotion to attract loyal customers and potential customers in certain countries.

Subway commits to offering the highest quality products. It tightly controls the supply chain to ensure that every product follows the highest quality and safety requirements. It develops comprehensive product specifications and reviews the samples from distribution to ensure that the products meet the requirements and customer expectations. A comprehensive third-party audit for food safety such as HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) and GMPs (Good Manufacturing Practices) are carried out on the food-supply facilities for Subway restaurants. Furthermore, Sandwich Artists harshly monitor the products to ensure the products at the proper holding temperatures. All of the food is prepared by strict shelf-life procedures to ensure freshness. All these procedures can strengthen customer’s loyalty and attract new customers. Besides, Subway has nutrition experts that will give detailed nutrition and ingredient information to make sure that the products are healthy and good to consumers.

Every business considers different types of pricing strategies when selling its products and services. This strategy is based on customer value, cost, and competition (Armstrong, Kotler, & Opresnik, n.d.). A company should define its pricing position, pricing segment, pricing ability, and competitive pricing reaction strategy before applying its pricing strategy. Such a strategy is important to improve the profitability of the business, gain market share, or join a new market. Subway's marketing pricing strategy has shown that it offers products at a higher price than its competitors and is more likely to serve food for calorie-conscious consumers. Thus, the price is reasonable.

Subway also strives to deliver better quality food than most of its competitors, making its prices comparatively higher. Their differential value-added pricing strategy is consistent with the quality. Subway's price strategy helps to keep all prices competitive. Its competitive prices attract more buyers and lead to generating more profitability. Besides, Subway starts the year with pricing discounts as the occurrence of the previous protests. The price discounts were revealed during a series of personal, regional conference calls from Subway's advertising agency.

In a marketing mix, promotion becomes an integral part of brand sustainability and public awareness. It is a focal point on how brands have their consumers' attraction and build their motives so they take action or make a purchase via the brand distribution channel. In simpler terms, promotion is of importance since brands can ensure that they reach the right consumer and objectives. To build an initial image Subway uses a slogan that depicts its brand and that slogan is “Eat fresh”. This promotes its product with confidence in mind that the products are fresh and of high quality.

By promoting the brand, Subway mainly focuses on two media channels of traditional media and online (social) media. In the traditional media, Subway uses televisions and radios. This is for the sole purpose to reach a wider audience and attract a higher number of people. Putting advertisements on television, Subway believes to be beneficial considering 49% of respondents responded that television ads are still relevant (Adobe, 2019) and television advertisements have a wide audience reach. An example of Subway using television as promotion media is when they collaborated with a well-known television cartoon series Family Guy. Subway made a deal with Family Guys so that their product is shown in one of Family Guy’s episodes and held by the main protagonist Peter Griffin.

Advertisements on radios are also still viable because they have a wide audience reach, reliable ROI and could make brands tell their stories more creatively (Lepp, 2019). On online and social media, Subway utilizes them for lowering their promotion costs. Also, it is effective considering the reach and the growth of internet usage. Both of those

reasons are also viable because it is validated that social media marketing is the cheapest option in means of promotion only spending 2.50 USD for the reach of 1000 people (Sherman, 2019).

Other methods are also used by Subway to promote its brand or products by attending trade exhibitions and events around the year doing various sales promotions in means of keeping its relevance in the public eyes and raising their brand awareness. Besides, Subway uses personal selling as a part of its promotion methods. It is believed that with large sales teams, Subway can enhance its existence in the retail stores thus increasing its awareness and molding a more solid brand image for the company.

Place as one of the marketing mix tools can also refer to the distribution strategy. This strategy will assist a product or service to be available and accessible for consumption or use by existing and potential customers. A good location decision will help Subway increase its product exposure rate which then helps to attract people's attention and can be easier to reach targeted customers. Hence, Subway is paying higher attention to the restaurant location and willing to assist its franchisees to choose the perfect location. For example, Subway's Site Selection Team will help the franchisees with the site selection process and the way to find an appropriate location. After that, the franchisee's local Business Development Agent will suggest whether the location is appropriate or not. The Field Representative and the local Leasing Department will then assist the franchisee to negotiate with the landlord on the lease issue. Such efforts will help Subway to ensure that the location chosen is suitable with reasonable rent. Through such strategies, Subway now possesses more than 21,000 franchisees in more than 100 countries worldwide. For instance, Subway records the highest number of restaurants of 22333 in the United States (Subway, 2019).

Besides, the company's international headquarters are in Milford, USA while Subway's international activities are conducted by five centers with different regions to support the company's international operations, including expansion of branches, product adaptation to match local preferences and implementation of a global strategy based on local requirements. For instance, The European regional franchise offices are based in Amsterdam, New Zealand and the Australian office is in Brisbane, the Asian region offices are in Singapore, Lebanon, and Beirut, while the regional office for Latin American is in Miami. Subway also uses selective distribution. This is because Subway franchisees need to get approval from the franchisor before starting their business on a selected location and the franchisees are willing to carry Subway's products. Subway also does not penetrate the market imprudently by stocking its products as many outlets as it could. This perspective can be shown when most Subway outlets are located in airports, shopping malls, amusement parks, business centers, hospitals, and colleges. These subway restaurants are positioned in upscale locations where consumers are more conscious of calories and will therefore be willing to pay a higher price. Subway website also has a section called 'Find our stores' where customers can enter their postcode, state, or city name and search. Customers will soon find the nearest Subway outlets when they are in need. This is quite convenient for them when they are in a strange place like traveling to another country. Plus, Subway is also considered as using a direct marketing channel that has no intermediary levels because it sells products directly to the customers (Armstrong et al, n.d. ). Subway's customers can either choose to dine in or use takeaway services. To boost revenues, Subway provides home delivery services in several countries.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study used several research methods to obtain research information. To examine Subway marketing 4P strategy, we investigated consumers' perceptions of Subway performances.

The data were collected to prove that the stated research qu<sup>26</sup>estions, test hyp<sup>23</sup>otheses, and evaluate outcomes. Sekaran & Bougie (2010) sta<sup>15</sup>tes that the collection of data can be primary data or secondary data or both. There is primary data and secondary data are used in this research.

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 Primary data are those obtained directly from the original or first-party source like interviews, surveys, and questionnaires. Secondary data are data that have been accumulated in the past and readily accessible for other people (Formplus Blog, 2020). Besides, secondary data are those containing at least one level of interpretation (Schindler, 2019).

Questionnaires and secondary data methods were selected and conducted to obtain information related to this study. Questionnaires were distributed to respondents through social media like Facebook, Whatsapp, and Wechat. The sample was selected randomly from a defined population. The purpose of sampling is to obtain accurate, simple, and relevant information. In addition, sampling saves cost and time (Gay, 1987). The respondents were made up of 100 people randomly selected from different ethnicities and backgrounds. According to Borg and Gall (1979: 195), large sample size is required since it is more representative of the population when the research has many variables. The secondary data that have been used for this study were books, internet references and journals.

Books are one of the primitive and easier methods for the researcher to find out the evidence that they can use to support their research. They are important to gain a deeper understanding and assist people's research to become more valid and reliable. The Internet is recognized as a global computer system that offers a wide variety of information and communication technologies. It helps link millions of public, private, business, academic, and government networks all over the world (Ifinedo, 2015). A journal is a collection of articles written by experts about very specific topics and will publish either in print or online forms or both (Mckenzie, 2018). All the data collected were then processed to complete this study.

#### 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1. Summary of Respondents' Demographics and Consumer's Perceptions of Subway Brand Awareness**

Response	Frequency	Percentage(%)
<b>14 Gender</b>		
Male	36	35.6
Female	65	64.4
<b>Age<sup>8</sup></b>		
18 - 25 years old	58	57.4
26 - 30 years old	33	32.7
31 - 40 years old	8	7.9
41 - 49 years <sup>28</sup>	1	1
50 years old and above	1	1

<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Malay	26	25.7
Chinese	54	53.5
Indian	18	17.8
Javanese	1	1
Indonesia	1	1
Bali	1	1
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<b>Nationality</b>		
Malaysian	83	82.2
Indian	11	10.9
Indonesian	7	6.9
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<b>Occupation</b>		
Student	55	54.5
Employed	43	42.6
Unemployed	2	2
Retiree	1	1
<hr/>		
<b>Vegetarian</b>		
Yes	15	14.9
No	86	85.1
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<b>Have you heard of the Subway brand before?</b>		
Yes	97	96
No	4	4
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<b>Have you purchased any Subway products in the past?</b>		
Yes	89	88.1
No	12	11.9
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<b>If so, what types of food have you purchased at Subway?</b>		
Sandwiches series	86	92.5
Breakfast series	35	37.6
Salads series	12	12.9
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<b>Do you prefer Subway?</b>		
Yes	94	93.1
No	7	6.9
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<b>No - Reason</b>		
Don't like the taste	1	20
Not delicious	1	20
Price is high	2	40
Unhealthy	1	20

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Table 1 shows that most of the respondents were female (64.4%), 18-25 years old (57.4%), and Chinese (53.5%). Besides, the majority of them were Malaysian (82.2%), students (54.5%), and non-vegetarians (85.1%).

Among the 101 responses, about 96% of respondents have heard of Subway brand before. Besides, about 88.1% of respondents have purchased Subway products in the

past. The highest record of food that respondents have purchased are sandwiches series (92.5%) followed by breakfast series (37.6%) and salads series (12.9%).

Apart from that, there are 94 (93.1%) respondents who prefer Subway while 7 (6.9%) respondents do not. In the survey, we have collected some opinions from the respondents who do not prefer Subway. A total of 2 or 40% of respondents felt that the prices are high and unaffordable while 1 respondent felt that the foods were not delicious, 1 respondent does not like the food taste and another 1(1%) believed that Subway foods were unhealthy.

Brand awareness affects consumer decisions as they are prone to choose a known brand when faced with a choice situation (Macdonald & Sharp, 2000). In this respect, Subway is relatively prominent in its brand awareness in the 12<sup>th</sup> of Table 1 analysis. They need to keep on striving to attract new customers as brand awareness has a significant positive relationship with customer purchase decisions (Ambolau, Kusumawati, & Mawardi, 2015; D et al., 2021).

**Table 2. Summary of Respondent's Perception of Subway Performances in Marketing 4P Strategy**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Are you satisfied with Subway's food taste?</b>		
Dissatisfied	0	0
Somewhere dissatisfied	2	2
Neutral	10	9.9
Satisfied	70	69.3
Highly satisfied	19	18.8
<b>Are you satisfied with the staff services?</b>		
Dissatisfied	0	0
Somewhere dissatisfied	1	1
Neutral	18	17.8
Satisfied	68	67.3
Highly satisfied	14	13.9
<b>Are you satisfied with Subway's food packaging?</b>		
Dissatisfied	0	0
Somewhere dissatisfied	2	2
Neutral	16	15.8
Satisfied	66	65.3
Highly satisfied	17	17
<b>What type of sandwiches do you like to buy at Subway?</b>		
Chicken Slice/Chicken Teriyaki	77	76.2
Italian B.M.T.	28	27.7
Meatball Marinara	22	21.8
Roast Beef/Roasted Chicken	23	22.8
Spicy Italian	15	14.9
Steak & Cheese	13	12.9
Subway Club/ Subway Melt	7	6.9
Tuna	34	33.7
Seafood & Crab	28	27.7

Turkey Breast	6	5.9
Turkey Breast & Chicken Slice	12	11.9
Veggie Delite	15	14.9
None	5	5
Bulgogi Chicken	1	1
I never had one	1	1

#### What type of breakfast do you like to buy at

##### Subway?

Breakfast Strip & Egg	6	5.9
Cheese & Egg	11	10.9
Chicken Slice & Egg	38	37.6
Tuna & Egg	3	3
None	43	42.6

#### What type of salads do you like to buy at

##### Subway?

Chicken Slice/Chicken Teriyaki	23	22.8
Italian B.M.T.	11	10.9
Meatball Marinara	5	5
Roast Beef/Roasted Chicken	5	5
Spicy Italian	8	7.9
Steak & Cheese	5	5
Subway Club/ Subway Melt	2	2
Tuna	6	5.9
Seafood & Crab	6	5.9
Turkey Breast	2	2
Turkey Breast & Chicken Slice	2	2
Veggie Delite	20	19.8
None	57	56.4

#### Normally, do you add any sauces to your sandwich?

Yes	95	94.1
No	6	5.9

#### Do you add on anything besides the sandwich? If yes, which of the following?

Chips	11	10.9
Fountain Drinks	14	13.9
Cookie	34	33.7
Bottle water	3	3
Pretzel	0	0
None	39	38.6

#### Which of the following that you prefer to order from Subway?

Dine-in	15	14.9
Take away	55	54.5
Food delivery	31	30.7

#### Is Subway's price affordable?

Yes	87	86.1
No	14	13.9

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**Are you concerned about the price while you are ordering your food at Subway?**

Yes	46	45.5
No	55	54.5

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**Do you think the Subway product price is worth the quality of the product?**

Yes	94	93.1
No	7	6.9

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**Do you think the price of Subway products is cheaper or more expensive compared to the other fast-food restaurants?**

Cheaper	9	8.9
Neutral	78	77.2
More expensive	14	13.9

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**What kind of promotions are you looking for in Subways' products?**

Discount	33	32.7
Voucher	65	64.4
Free Sampling	3	3

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**How do you know about Subway?**

Press release	2	2
Social Media	57	56.4
Friend or Family recommended	66	65.3
Advertisement	46	45.5
Sponsor for campus events	19	18.8
Food Delivery Apps	44	43.6
Found myself	1	1

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**Do you follow or like the Subway official account or page in social media?**

Yes	45	44.55
No	56	55.45

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**Will you recommend Subway to your friends or family members? Why?**

Yes	89	88.1
Maybe	4	4
No	8	7.9

**Yes - Reason:**

Healthy	13	12.9
Delicious	27	26.7
Convenient	4	4
Quality	3	3
Affordable	1	1

**No - Reason:**

Price is high	3	3
Haven't try before	1	1
Do not get used to it	1	1

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**Do you prefer Subway to implement co-branding?**

Yes	6	5.9
No	79	78.2
Do not know	3	3
Not sure	2	2
Do not mind	1	1
Maybe	1	1
Company	6	5.9
Artist	1	1
Local brand	1	1
Ambiguous	1	1

**Is the location of Subway accessible?**

Yes	93	92.1
No	8	7.9

**Have you visited the Subway Website to search for the nearest Subway restaurant before?**

Yes	73	72.3
No	28	27.7

**Are you satisfied with the layout of the Subway restaurant?**

1-Highly Dissatisfied	1	1
2-Dissatisfied	1	1
3-Neutral	10	9.9
4-Satisfied	76	75.2
5-Highly Satisfied	13	12.9

Table 2 indicates that most of the respondents were satisfied with Subway food taste (69.35) and 10.8% of respondents were highly satisfied. In terms of their trans-situational goals or the needs and degree to which the possession and use of the product can evoke and satisfy various functions embedded in these needs, the sense of a product to a person can be seen as closely related to the values of the individual (Schwartz, 1994).

The representation of products seems to be a particularly important theme in consumer research. Hence, Subway has launched out various types of sandwiches, breakfasts, and salads to satisfy customer tastes and needs. Besides, the products or services must be packaged and properly priced. Subway also needs to make sure the price is right and the products are the same as shown in the advertisement to maintain customer loyalty and attract potential customers.

Table 2 also signified that most of the respondents were satisfied with the staff's service. 67.3% were satisfied and 13.9% were highly satisfied. Some of the respondents were not satisfied with staff service for the staff service was slow. Besides, the staff attitude also affects customers' satisfaction. Some of the respondents said they look lazy or arrogant, have no smiling faces, and are impatient. The respondents highlighted inconsistent product quality among Subway restaurants. This shows that these restaurants do not have a clear and consistent standard. This will make the customers feel dissatisfied and switch to other brands.

Thorsten and Alexander (1997) considered the strategic driver for competitive advantage is customer satisfaction of the company's goods and services. In the sense of relationship marketing, customer satisfaction contributes to the long-term retention of

customers since dissatisfied customers have a very high switching rate (Lin & Wu, 2011). Therefore, Subway has to make some changes to increase customer satisfaction, maintain customer loyalty, and attract potential customers. The headquarters of Subway should give a clear and consistent standard of procedure. The supervisors have to inspect the restaurants, evaluate staff performance, and train them regularly. Therefore, the problem of product quality, staff attitude, and speed of service can be solved.

Table 2 also shows that 76.2% of the respondents liked the taste of Chicken Slice or Chicken Teriyaki, 33.7% liked the Tuna taste, and 1% liked the taste of Bulgogi Chicken. Also, 42.6% of respondents did not buy breakfast from Subway while 37.6% liked to buy Chicken Slice and Egg. Half of the respondents (56.2%) respondents did not buy salads from Subway while 22.8% of respondents bought Chicken Slice or Chicken Teriyaki.

The new eating habits can be identified and categorized according to eating places, eating time, food types, and the eateries as shown by Mat (2003), and Baweh (2004). Each country has a breakfast culture of its own. For example, Malaysians would like to have breakfast in restaurants because it is cheaper than Subway and they generally do not have the habit of eating salad. Therefore, if Subway wants to explore some new flavors or food, they need to understand the culture of the country and its eating habits.

Table 2 shows that most of the respondents like to add sauces to sandwiches. It shows 38.6% of the respondents do not buy any sides when buying sandwiches, 33.7% buy cookies together with sandwiches, 13.9% buy fountain drinks and 10.9% buy chips. In particular, young consumers are lovers of snack food, which accounts for a major component of their expenditures (Dibley & Baker, 2001). Hausman (2000) noticed that customers sometimes buy on a whim, pleasure, fantasy, social and emotional satisfaction rather than just for financial reasons.

Furthermore, most of the respondents were satisfied with Subway's food packaging. There were 65.3% of respondents were satisfied and 16.8% of respondents were highly satisfied with the packaging. Subway has been committed to improving the sustainability of its packaging. Therefore, Subway redesigned and eliminated unnecessary packaging. Subway has transformed all packaging into renewable and recyclable materials while ensuring that the products are presented safely and cleanly to reduce food waste. Millions of pounds of possible waste have been saved by redesigning the packaging.

Half of the respondents (54.5%) preferred takeaway, 30.7% used the food app delivery, and 14.9% preferred dine-in. Dietary differences among socio-economic groups seemed to have a greater effect on the purchasing of takeaway food (Turrell & Giskes, 2008). This indicates that the food system could be more complex, with economic and socio-cultural variables potentially affecting the intake of food and the actions associated with food (Giskes, van Lenthe, & Avendano-Pabon, 2011).

As for healthier Subway products, we conclude that most of the respondents gave positive comments since Subway sandwiches have many vegetables, fewer calories, and more nutrition compared with other fast-food restaurants. As we know, in various types of subs, Subway provides fresh and balanced food, even some doctors recommend its nutritional food.

Our questionnaires recorded several reasons why customers decide to purchase Subway food. One of the reasons is the sandwiches are delicious and healthy because Subway products are made with fresh ingredients. Subway offered a variety of sandwiches to fulfill customers' tastes. The respondents brought Subway sandwiches because the sandwiches are hygienic and fewer calories. Besides, the location of Subway restaurants is easy to access near shopping malls, business centers, schools, and colleges. Lastly, the respondents said they are willing to purchase Subway food due

to its convenient delivery service. The online food ordering platforms provide consumers with extended choice and convenience, enabling customers with a simple tap on their mobile phone to order from a wide range of restaurant choices (Hirschberg, Rajko, Schumacher, & Wrulich, 2016)

In the context of price affordability, 86.1% of respondents are in favor of price, and 13.9% do not find it affordable. Also, 45.5% of respondents are concerned about price while 54.5% of respondents are not concerned yet focused on taste and meal. Subway introduces the most healthy and fresh food and the highly popular one is the submarine sandwich.

Besides, 93.1% of respondents agreed that Subway product price is worth the quality of the product. A total of 8.9% of respondents stated that the price is cheaper than most big brands. On the other hand, 13.9% disagree with this and 77.2% are neutral. Subway serves attractive and delicious fast food in the whole market. It serves healthy products as it uses acres of veggies. Subway can focus more on bundle pricing strategy by offering two or more complementary products together and selling them at a single price. This is a perfect way to add value through the offerings to customers who do not resist paying more for more than one product. It can also help the customers know more about the variety of Subway products in a shorter time.

Our survey also questioned respondents' perception on what kind of promotions or specific deals that they are looking for and enthusiastic about. Marketers can use this information as an advantage to their promotion strategy and their core to their strategy. Some promotion options are product discounts, vouchers, and free samples.

The results show 32.7% of the respondents prefer discounts, 64.4% prefer vouchers, and 2.9 prefer free sampling. The majority of the respondents suggest vouchers as a means of a promotion method in Subway. Variations of the deals on the voucher can also be considered to test consumer tendency of what kind of vouchers or they like. Finding out their consumer preferences make their promotion strategy more tailored to consumer needs and wants thus improving the wellbeing of consumers and ensuring the delivery of the brand's value (Davenport, DalleMule, & Lucker, 2011).

The questionnaires also aimed to identify how Subway consumers found out about Subway brand. The results vary and are divided into 7 groups of press releases (2%), social media (56.4%), recommendations from friends or family (65.3%), advertisements (45.5%), sponsor of campus events (18.8%), food delivery application (43.6%), and consumers found the brand themselves (1%). This concludes that there are two major manners that the public has. Subway can focus on those major points of consumers interacting with the brand so that their brand awareness rises affecting overall brand equity (Huang & Sarigollu, 2014). On top of that, traditional mouth-to-mouth marketing or word-of-mouth marketing remains necessary. It is still relevant to this day and Subway cannot ignore this. Strengthening customer experiences is the way Subway can work so its mouth-to-mouth marketing is ensured and sustained (Kenton, 2020). Addedly, the upside of this method is essentially free marketing. Marketing through food delivery applications can also ensure and trigger mouth-to-mouth marketing. It makes the public identify Subway faster and eliminates the tedious task that consumers have to physically go out to purchase their products.

Besides, half of the respondents are following Subway's social media account (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter). A consumer following a brand's social media account is an important aspect of maintaining and molding a superb consumer experience. Social media helps brands to make customers learn about new products and services, stay up to date with the brand's news, communicate to the brand itself, and build an overall good experience with the brand (Marketingcharts, 2020). From a broader point of view, 71%

of consumers engage with a brand's social media creating added value to the consumers about the brand (Marketingcharts, 2020). In conclusion, brands need to convert their consumers to follow their social media accounts for the sole reason of providing value.

Realizing that social media followers and presence are important aspects for businesses in this era, Subway needs to have awareness in this area. Therefore, conversion from consumers that uses social media to consumers following a brand's social media is important. In the beginning, Subway can plan strategies to increase one of their social media followers making them more focused on one platform at a time thus knowing their niche on one social media platform. Facebook can be considered as one social media to focus and grow from. According to Maryam (2020), there are 2.6 billion active monthly Facebook users giving an advantage of a wide reach of people. Subway then can convert the audience into their followers by running Facebook ads, making attention-grabbing content, partnerships with influencers, and engaging with the community (Martins, 2020).

In the questionnaire, the answers have qualitative tendencies or have open-ended answers so that marketers can better understand the conditions of their consumers not just having numerical outputs boosting the relevance of past theories (Astuti, 2020). The results from this particular question are repetitive. As the majority of respondents answering yes, they will recommend Subway to their friends and family. Variations that appear from the answers can be generalized that respondents would like to recommend Subway because their products are delicious and healthy. It can be concluded that Subway can make good quality products from these responses, meaning these respondents' expectations are met in terms of products. Products that are good from the core can also have advantages or overall good impact to boost a brand's promotion strategy. In this case, the majority of respondents have positive feedback on Subway products and it fuels them to recommend to their friends and family (Caramela, 2020). Referring to the data before, Subway's main marketing strategy can revolve around mouth-to-mouth marketing as it is still the main way that Subway is getting public awareness. Being conscious about the feedback that these respondents (Subway consumers) have can be turned into a metric for calculating the success of marketing strategy meaning the growth of Subway is now tangible to variables.

The results of brand preference questions show that 78.2% of respondents prefer Subway avoids co-branding. This assumes that Subway is independent and not associated with other brands. The advantage of brand independence is the public will perceive Subway as an entity that cannot be replaced and it can reach brand resonance making consumers have the brand on their top of mind.

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Place refers to the process that products and services are transformed from the producer to the customer (Goi, 2009). From our survey, we found 92.1% of respondents agreed that the location of Subway outlets is accessible and reachable. Besides, 72.3% of respondents have searched for the nearest Subway restaurant through the Subway website. This indicates that most of the customers know how to use the website to search for the nearest Subway restaurant. Apart from that, the survey showed that 75.2% of respondents were satisfied, 12.9% of respondents were highly satisfied with Subway restaurant layout.

In the marketing mix, place involves warehousing facilities, distribution channels, inventory control management, convergence, location, assortment, logistics, and mode of transportation (Singh, 2012). The distribution channels help the company to promote, sell, and deliver the products to final consumers, such as retailers, financial intermediaries, physical distributors, and marketing services agencies (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012). Therefore, Subway should make sure that the outlets of Subway restaurants are enough in targeted markets to bring more conveniences to the consumers. Besides that, Subway can also advertise the functions and features of their

website through their official social media web pages like Facebook and Instagram to encourage people to use Subway website when having any inquiries or problems. This will also help to create brand awareness. Moreover, Subway should also consider focusing on the innovation in upgrading the layout of the restaurants from the aspect of size, design, and color to maximize customer satisfaction.

**Table 3. Summary of Respondent Suggestions and Impression**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>What kind of improvements are you looking for in Subway? Why?</b>		
Do not know	3	2.97
No	41	40.59
Everything is good	6	5.94
Product and Service	31	30.69
Price	6	5.94
Promotion	3	2.97
Place	7	6.93
Ambiguous	4	3.96
<b>Could you share your first impression/experience with Subway?</b>		
No	48	47.5
Haven't try yet	2	2
I don't remember	2	2
Don't know how to order	2	2
Attractive	1	1
Good services	20	19.8
A lot of choices	5	5
Sandwich delicious	16	15.8
Look like a vegetarian restaurant	4	4

Table 3 signifies that the majority of the respondents (41 respondents) had no suggestion for Subway improvement while 31 respondents suggested Subway improve the products and services. They recommended Subway to increase the range of food and drinks choices. They have asked for more breakfast choices, vegetarian options, and side dishes. They also expect fruit salads, pasta or soup, and sometimes pita options instead of just wrap. In the context of service, they hoped Subway to be faster when preparing the food or serving. Besides, they were also looking for more friendly, polite, hardworking, and humble staff attitudes. They also urged all the franchisees to abide by uniform standard operating procedures (SOP) of food preparation and improve the way to maintain the food freshness. This is because they found that some outlets gave more slices of chicken while others gave less, and the food was sometimes not so fresh. Lastly, they also look for drive-thru service.

Hence, Subway needs to put more effort into its product innovation to meet varied customer expectations. This is because people will be more likely to buy a product from a brand providing a more diverse product as it is related to higher perceived quality and this will enhance their repeat purchase rate (Berger, Draganska, & Simonson, 2007). Besides, Subway also needs to pay attention to their staff's service as we found their attitudes had aroused people's dissatisfaction. This is vital as Pei, Guo, Wu, Zhou, and

Yeh found that customer experience with staff service will positively influence their level of satisfaction. As customer satisfaction has a positive impact on customer loyalty (Ibojo, & Asabi, 2015), Subway should confront customer loss if they are unable to improve the staff service.

For the questions that related to respondent's impressions, the results show that 47.5% of respondents prefer not to share their first impression or experience with Subway whereas 19.8% of respondents mentioned that their first impressions or experiences were good services from the staff and restaurants. A total of 16 respondents shared their first impressions were that Subway sandwiches were delicious while 5 mentioned that there are a lot of choices in the menu, 4 respondents said that the restaurant looks like a vegetarian restaurant while 2 or 2% of respondents mentioned that they have not tried Subway foods, 2 respondents did not remember their first impressions, 2 respondents were confused and did not know how to order, and 1 respondent said the first impression with Subway was attractive.

Therefore, Subway should always focus on quality services by providing the staff with knowledge and standard operating procedures (SOP) of the foods, positive attitudes, and cleanliness to provide a guideline for first-time consumers. Besides, Subway shall advertise and promote best-selling sandwiches or the best type of sandwich combinations through social media so that customers who first order the sandwich will have more choices based on the recommendation of sandwich combinations. This will help to maximize customers satisfaction and increase brand awareness. According to Kumar, Choi, and Greene (2017), social media provides a good platform for businesses to raise their brand awareness as it assists the brand to expose to a large number of customers. Besides, customer satisfaction level is influenced by a company's qualities of brand features (Khan & Afsheen, 2012) and customer satisfaction is associated with customer loyalty (Mittal & Lassar, 1998). Thus, when a brand's product or service meets its customer demands and needs, customer satisfaction can be reached and its customer will become loyal. Then, the profits of the company will be maximized.

## CONCLUSIONS

9

Our analysis underlined that the majority of the respondents are satisfied with Subway's product, service, and packaging. Its popular product is Chicken Slice/Chicken Teriyaki flavor sandwiches. A minority of the respondents choose to dine-in in Subway restaurants. The customers decide to purchase since the sandwich is delicious and healthy, a variety of sandwiches is available, and the location is easy to access. However, Subway has some problems that need to be solved. They are inconsistent product quality, poor staff attitudes, and slow service.

To solve these problems, Subway needs to make some research for certain countries about the people's behavior and culture for food and beverage when they want to launch some new product to consumers as our survey found that most of the respondents do not buy Subway sandwiches and salads because most of the respondents in Malaysia do not have such eating behaviors. Also, we suggest that Subway follows the trend to launch new products such as spicy taste or limited-time products for Chinese New Year, *Hari Raya*, or *Hari Merdeka* to attract young consumers and maintain loyal customers. Subway's headquarters should give clear and consistent standard procedures to provide consistent product quality. The supervisors have to regularly inspect the restaurants, evaluate staff performance, and train them to maintain their good attitudes while providing good and fast service to customers. Subway's packaging can switch to sustainable packaging. Subway can sell merchandise with Subway's brand like thermos cups or food boxes. Customers might get discounts when they takeaway by using Subway's merchandise while reducing the packaging cost and encourage customers to respond to environmental protection.

For the price element, most respondents agreed that Subway product's prices are affordable. Although Subway's products are more expensive than its competitor, it creates value in their products and services with quality. Subway claims that they serve better quality and fresh foods compared to the 9 competitors. Subway offers different pricing strategies with value pricing. Therefore, the majority of the respondents agreed that Subway product prices are worth the quality of the products. However, Subway can focus more on bundle pricing strategy by offering two or more complementary products together and selling them at a single price. This is a perfect way to add value through the offerings to customers who do not resist paying more for more than one product. It can also help the customers know more about the variety of Subway products.

Besides, the majority of respondents are looking for a voucher promotion. Subway can choose to disseminate the information of vouchers through the social media platform. There were four major manners that the public knew about Subway's brand: friends and family recommendations or mouth to mouth advertising, social media platform, advertisement, and food delivery apps. Through this analysis, Subway needs to strengthen its customer experience and expectation. Subway also needs to elevate people's awareness on their official page on social media as the statistics showed only 45 out of 101 respondents had liked or followed it. This is important to approach a large number of customers via social media. They can try to collaborate with influencers to grab more people's attention. Also, the majority of respondents agreed to recommend Subway to others and do not prefer Subway to implement co-branding. This showed that Subway is affirmed by the public and they perceived Subway as a brand that cannot be replaced.

5

From the aspect of the place element, the majority of the respondents agreed that the location of Subway restaurant is accessible. Subway has more than 21,000 franchisees in more than 100 countries worldwide. Subway is one of the fastest-growing franchises and 100% franchise-based organization with all the restaurants being independently possessed and managed. The concept of purchasing that Subway uses is direct selling to customers. Therefore, to bring more conveniences to the consumers, Subway should make sure that the outlets are enough in the places of targeted markets. Besides, our survey showed that most of the respondents have visited the Subway website to search for the nearest Subway restaurant, implying it can also advertise the functions and features of its website through its official social media web pages.

Our study limitation was that the causality of respondent's open-ended questions answers was difficult to investigate. For example, the particular worker that showed a negative attitude or the franchisee that did not follow the standard operating procedure when preparing the food. Besides, there was also insufficient data to represent the target population as most of the respondents were Malaysian. Hence, the data results were not enough to generalize Malaysian, Indian, and Indonesian perceptions towards Subway's performances. On these limitations, future research can increase more sample size to represent different populations

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