



## **McDonald's Customer's Satisfaction Strategies during COVID-19 Pandemic in Malaysia**

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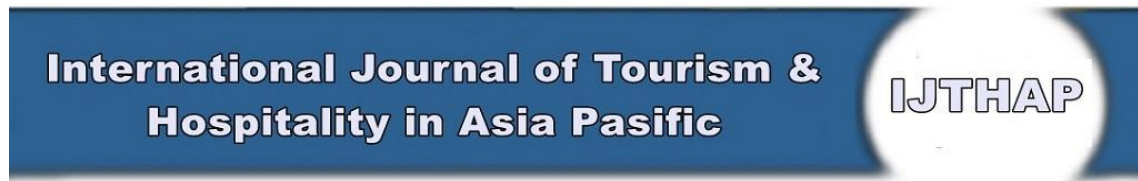
### **ABSTRACT**

Generally, McDonald's is recognized as one of the most successful brands worldwide. They are well-known throughout the world for their popular fast food, especially burgers. However, COVID-19 pandemic has impacted various economic sectors, including Food & Beverage. McDonald's sales have also been impacted when COVID-19's lockdown restricts the dine-in operation and limits the customer's satisfaction due to the SOP. Thus, this research aims to identify and analyze the strategies implemented by McDonald's to increase the customer's satisfaction during Covid-19 pandemic. To find out the result of the research, a survey has been conducted and the data was collected from individuals with different age and income ranges in Malaysia. A total of 100 individuals have participated in this survey. Besides, in order to gain a better understanding of our study, secondary data for this study was gathered from a variety of websites, journals, and articles. The findings of this research indicate that McDonald's decision to increase the Food & Safety measure is by implementing various safety requirements. This is the most successful approach to improve customer's satisfaction during COVID-19. They chose this strategy to demonstrate their commitment to preserve a healthy life.

**Keywords:** Customer's Satisfaction, COVID-19 Pandemic, Food & Safety Measure, McDonald's

### **INTRODUCTION**

McDonald's is regarded as one of the world's most successful fast-food chains, catering to people's needs on a daily basis. They are famous for their fast-food products. Fast food chains are described as any establishment that serves food through a self-service counter or a drive-through window. However, the primary aim of a fast-food restaurant is to serve food in a short amount of time (Bougoure & Neu, 2010). Customers with tight time constraints who cannot wait for their food to be prepared on the spot and prioritizing the speed of service will most likely consume the fast-food products. McDonald's fast-



food products not only consist of hamburgers, cheeseburgers, and French fries, but they also offer chicken, breakfast items, soft drinks, milkshakes, wraps, and desserts. The franchise is also providing salads, seafood, smoothies, and fruit on the menu to provide customers with a healthier dining experience and a healthy diet (Chia et al., 2020).

The Richard and Maurice McDonald brothers opened the first franchise restaurant in 1948, where they introduced the "Speedee Service System," which has since become a standard for fast food in modern restaurant (Raj & Singh, 2020). They started selling hotdogs and franchising their company in 1954. In 1955, an inventor, Roy Kroc, obtained McDonald's license outside California, which led to his first McDonald's restaurant being established. The restaurant thrived in 1958, selling record-breaking 1000 million hamburgers. McDonald's continued to grow successfully, opening the 3000th McDonald's restaurant in Woolwich, UK in 1974. McDonald's made headlines in 2003 with the unveiling of the "I'm Lovin' It" campaign's theme. The campaign's theme and attitude are being integrated throughout the business, from crew training and the overall restaurant experience to national sponsorships, promotions, television, internet, merchandising, and new local street marketing (Rowley, 2004). In addition, McDonald's launched the first 'McDelivery' programmed in Singapore in 2005, and a year later, the company released health facts on the packaging of all its goods with the aim of benefiting consumers and becoming environmentally sustainable (Rajawat et al., 2020). McDonald's has grown to become one of the top and most successful fast-food franchises in the world, with locations in almost all of the world's major cities.

McDonald's has achieved global dominance as a result of a variety of factors. They have done an excellent job at establishing the brand's identity. Creating and maintaining a brand identity is regarded as the first step toward building strong brands (Kapferer, 1996). In addition, the key factors for McDonald's success in different countries are their willingness to adapt and create various innovations. McDonald's is a global brand due to their global standards and training operations, but at the same time it is local, franchising local entrepreneurs, providing food locally and meeting specific local consumer demands (Crawford, Humphries & Geddy, 2015). McDonald's considers cultural factors when serving Malaysian customers. The food is halal and has a distinct regional flavor.

The McDonald's brand differentiated from competitors not only through customer loyalty, but also through quality, consistency and standardization to name a few variables. Basic service delivery is not enough to differentiate an organization in today's competitive marketplace but managers need to understand which service qualities the customers will value (Beck, 2005). McDonald's competitive advantage relies on several strategies. The brand makes extensive use of economies of scale to gain cost-benefit and sticks to their restaurants' 'fast food' style. They are known for quick customer service without losing consistency. In addition, universality of taste is largely another basis for McDonald's competitive advantage. Big Mac tastes the same almost all over the world, using the same ingredients in the same quantities and applying standardized cooking methods around the globe. That consistency has positive effects on consumer loyalty.

Suddenly, the COVID-19 pandemic came to light and affected various economic sectors, and the effect of the pandemic on the global economy is severe. Food & Beverage is no



exception. McDonald's reported a significant reduction in worldwide same-store sales and below profit estimates as a result of the COVID-19 shutdown, which restricted dine-in operation to drive-thru and delivery only (Nivedita & Russ, 2020). McDonald's Corp mentioned, that this quarter, COVID-19 and the resulting closures or service reductions could have a "material" negative impact on their financial results, although it cannot be predicted how much (Maze, 2020). The prediction was true when McDonald's revenue fell from \$1.52 billion or \$1.97 per share to \$3.76 billion and net income fell to \$483.8 million, or 65 cents per share, a year earlier.

The restriction on dine-in operations not only affected the sales of McDonald's products, but also affect customer satisfaction who buy the products indirectly. Customer satisfaction is one of an organization's most common and important aspects, especially in the fast-food industry. Because of market competition and business availability, an organization needs to focus on how satisfied a customer is with their products and services.

Every business organization's success depends on customer satisfaction (Khadka, 2017). The business strategy is aimed at increasing customer satisfaction by providing high quality goods and services. Customer satisfaction plays a crucial role in developing organizational policies and goals. If the service succeeded, the consumer would naturally happy and satisfied. Customer service is very influential on the value of the company. The fast-food industry uses customer service extensively because efficient service influences customer loyalty. Customer loyalty is at the forefront of industry and has positive or negative value based on customer support level.

The literature review examines the strategies of McDonald's to increase the satisfaction of their customers in terms of quality of services. McDonald's is a well-known and large company with a large customer base, which is the primary source of its success. This review will briefly examine how McDonald's Malaysia improves their customer's satisfaction through various strategies that have been implemented during COVID-19 pandemic and to measure how far the strategies can increase or improve the customer's satisfaction. It will serve as the basis for this research, which will focus on how McDonald's most important asset, in this case is their customers, experience the new improvement made by this company and satisfy with the various strategies.

#### **Increase the Food and Safety Measure**

During the MCO, McDonald's Malaysia has stepped up their food protection and hygiene program to ensure their citizens and customers' health and well-being. Food safety has been a major concern since the COVID-19 pandemic, as consumers are concerned about the potential food spread of the virus. Within the restaurants, the brand has enforced high standards of food safety and cleanliness (McDonald's.com, 2020). Like any restaurant, they must adhere to health and sanitation regulations. If their food does not comply with a specific regulation, they must close their outlet (Pathmanathan, Kee, Pandiyan, Yuganathan, Sivakumaran, & Alrashed, 2019). The first implementation they did was to issue a policy requiring the obligation to wear masks for all staff and customers before entering all McDonald's premises, and also requires each person to be subjected to body temperature checks to see if their body temperature is high enough to be



subjected to the virus. Even if we are healthy, monitoring our body temperature can help to detect disease early (Torrance, 2020). Furthermore, keeping hands clean is especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic to help to prevent the virus from spreading. Therefore, McDonald's ensures that all staff and customer hands are sanitized before any buying and selling transaction are made. Moreover, the take-away foods are properly sealed with rider and crew temperature readings on the bag.

#### **Increase the Number of Food Deliveries**

Following COVID-19, with the government banning food and beverage establishments from accepting dine-in customers as reported cases continue to grow, the food supply delivery business is gaining popularity, McDonald's is no exception. In fact, they have long been accommodating delivery services for their food. By launching the food delivery service, McDonald's can serve more customers beyond their restaurant capacity during peak hours, increasing sales and profits (Utama et al., 2020). However, with the emergence of COVID-19, they doubled the number of food deliveries to meet the needs of customers and this strategy is not only focused on the current areas they focused on. Instead, they try to increase the number of delivery points in Malaysia to serve more customers and double the number of McDonald's delivery riders across Malaysia. This approach is introduced to ensure that food orders from customers arrive on time at their doorstep while ensuring food quality is taken care of. McDonald's partnership with FoodPanda and GrabFood helped delivery riders to grow exponentially.

#### **Upgrading the Drive-Thru system**

As we all know, McDonald's customers can order and pick up food in their vehicles with a "drive-through" option. Offering a drive-thru system during COVID-19 pandemic helped McDonald's to stay accessible to customers as it limits the amount of direct interaction with staff and customers. We can see that most customers now buy their food more comfortably through a drive-thru system than in the restaurant during this pandemic. Therefore, considering the growing number of people using drive-thru, employers and operators must understand the value of time. Innovative drive-thru technology appears to be one solution to quick-service restaurant problems (Morcos, Tak & Gregoire, 1992). Effective use of the drive-thru window ensures faster operation, leading to more customer service and improving customer satisfaction. McDonald's increased their staff at drive-thru checkpoints to accommodate the growing number of drive-thru users. By doing so, different staff can take more orders from different customers simultaneously, making it more efficient for customers and not having to wait long for their orders to be prepared. They will be more satisfied with buying McDonald's products. Moreover, some McDonald's outlets varied their outdoor digital drive-thru menu displays by showing the menu based on that particular days' time, weather and current restaurant traffic as well as what menu was in trend to provide customers with a better viewing experience while waiting for their turn to order food. However, this implementation is limited to certain outlets, and we believe McDonald's will expand this feature into more outlets in the future.

#### **Incorporating Technology**

Thanks to the recent boom in IT services, customers can now order food from home comfort using cell phone applications. It fits the lifestyle of today's society, where people





are busy and do not want to wait in line or queue to buy food and beverages for a long time (Hendry, 2018). Regular McDonald's customers may have been familiar with their mobile application, McDelivery, which can be downloaded from both the Apple App Store and Google Play Store as well as the website. With the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic, McDonald's has been upgrading the functionality of their application to provide more news to their customers and create a powerful digital experience growth engine that provides a quick and simple experience. Not only that, they have created a new program for their McDelivery service, called Contactless and Cashless Scheme. Starting on 27 March last year, McDelivery disabled the cash payment function and only accepted online payment via ATM or credit cards. Furthermore, they announced a partnership with TOUCH'n Go eWallet at the end of November last year to enable cashless payment to be made via smartphone and at the premises itself to ensure that customers feel safer by not having any direct interaction with strangers during the COVID-19 pandemic. By incorporating and further developing the technology, McDonald's aims to increase customer satisfaction levels, and we believe they have succeeded. However, the final outcome of whether this strategy has really improved customer satisfaction can only be determined at the end of this research through our survey.

### **Maximizing Digital Marketing**

McDonald's is one of the world's best-known fast-food brands due to its comprehensive advertising and marketing approach (Schneider, 2020). This brand communicates their product offering to a broad people by combining digital, print and television advertising. Suddenly, COVID-19 pandemic resulted in an unprecedented rise in screen time for all as a result of widespread implementation of social distancing measures. To stay connected with customers, McDonald's has maximized their digital marketing through various platforms, such as social networking sites. In every aspect of Malaysian life, social networking sites play an important role, especially among younger generations who are the most internet users. Feedback from customers is really important, especially during this pandemic, so that this giant company knows how satisfied their customers are with various recent implementations made by McDonald's to comply with the current changes. Feedback, requests and complaints from customers can be answered instantly and conveniently via social media like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, so customers can get immediate assistance. In addition, by responding to customer needs in public, McDonald's can demonstrate the quality of their service and accountability. Due to the pandemic situation, McDonald's had decided to release a campaign video on YouTube titled 'Delivery, Now Contactless & 100% Cashless.' This campaign video gained nearly 2 million views to date.

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

Customer satisfaction has traditionally been the domain of marketing academics and practitioners, with the first studies in the field dating back to the late 20th century (Aymar & Joseph, 2019). Several methods of obtaining data have been observed to conduct an opinion of the study on the measures taken by McDonald's Malaysia to their customer satisfaction strategies during COVID-19. To understand the concept of the study, we looked at a variety of articles, websites, and journals. In addition, we included a survey



that we conducted as part of this research. Along with the methods, data, findings, and conclusions about McDonald's customers based on satisfaction are gathered. The questionnaires were created using Google Forms and targeted 100 people who took the time to complete the survey. This survey was made available through WhatsApp.

The survey is our primary data source, and it has influenced the majority of the research bases and findings. The survey is divided into four sections, the first of which asks respondents about their personal information. The second section is intended to assess general consumer comprehension or brand awareness among respondents respectively. The third section, which consisted of eight questions, was presented to the respondents. These questions range from 'very dissatisfied' to 'very satisfied', and respondents were asked to rate the eight facts based on their own level of satisfaction when consuming the product or service of McDonald's during COVID-19. Finally, the last section in the Google Form is about McDonald's strategies to improve customer's satisfaction during COVID-19 pandemic which consists of five questions. The respondents are asked to rate the ten facts based on their perceptions of the McDonald's improvement and strategies, which range from very dissatisfied to very satisfied. Questions were asked on strategies to improve food and safety measures, increase the number of food deliveries, incorporating technology, and maximizing digital marketing.

In order to gain a better understanding of our study, secondary data for this study was gathered from a variety of websites, journals, and articles. The data was gathered from the official McDonald's website as well as McDonald's Malaysia. Benefits of using both websites have the most up-to-date and relevant information that we require to write this study (Kee et al., 2021). In the introduction to this study, several journals were used to understand the current situation. Furthermore, one of our resources for staying up to date on McDonald's news was social media. Since the government implemented CMCO, customers have benefited greatly. Any update of recent news could affect operating hours, dine-in situations, and more could be uploaded in McDonald's social media.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The topic research questionnaires included both qualitative and quantitative questions. The questions were inside the survey form created with Google Form. This survey aimed to learn how people are aware of McDonald's, customer satisfaction level before COVID-19, and the strategy of McDonald's to improve customer satisfaction during COVID-19.

**Table 1.** Demographic of respondents (N = 100)

Respondents	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>	
Female	53
Male	47
<b>Age</b>	
15 years old and below	6
16-24 years old	60



25-34 years old	18
35-44 years old	9
45 years old and above	7
<b>Employment Status</b>	
Student	47
Part-time	13
Full-time	29
Self-employed	11
<b>Monthly Income</b>	
No income	39
Below RM1,000	17
RM1,000-RM3,000	24
RM3,001-RM5,000	12
RM5,000 and above	8

Table 1 shows the demographics of 100 respondents including their gender, age, employment status, and monthly income. Out of 100 respondents, 53% of respondents were female and others were male. The majority of these respondents comprises 60% of respondents who are between the ages of 16 to 24 years old, while 18 respondents are aged from 25 to 34 years old. This indicates that McDonald's customers are mostly young people. For employment status, 47% respondents are students, followed by the full-timer (29%), part-timer (13%), and self-employed (11%). The fast-food industry's rapid expansion has created an extravagant trend in fast food consumption, particularly among young and active university students. With a tight schedule, university students want food that is expressive or a quick lunch to satisfy their gastronomic needs, emphasizes that fast food is the world's fastest increasing food type, and it is quick, affordable, and convenient (Mat, Zulqernain & Zaid, 2016). For monthly income, as much as 39% of respondents had no income. Since most of the respondents are students, we expect that they will have no income and live off on an allowance provided by their parents, government or through a scholarship.

**Table 2.** Awareness about McDonald (N = 100)

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>How well do you know McDonald's?</b>	
Very well	62
Moderate	36
Not much	2
<b>How do you know about McDonald's? (can tick more than one)</b>	
Newspaper and magazines	27
Social media	71
Television advertisement	66
Family and friends	57
<b>How often do you eat McDonald's?</b>	
Once a year	21



Once a month	57
Once a week	19
More than once a week	3

Table 2 shows the awareness of 100 respondents about McDonald's. From the survey, 62% of respondents know well about McDonald's, 36% of respondents chose moderate, while 2% of respondents do not know well about McDonald's. There are about 282 McDonald's outlets in Malaysia alone which trigger the awareness of most Malaysians on the presence of this giant franchise.

The next question allows respondents to select more than one answer to determine their awareness of McDonald's. As much as 77% know McDonald's from social media occupying the majority of the respondents in this survey. Brands develop pages on social networking sites where they share product insights to inform consumers and post their content in videos or photographs to attract the target market's attention to their products (Ansari, Ansari, Ghori & Kazi, 2019). It is no surprise that marketers embraced social media as a marketing medium, given the large potential audience spending many hours a day on multiple platforms using social media (Appel, Grewal, Hadi & Stephen, 2019). Besides, 66% respondents chose television as the medium of brand awareness, followed by family and friends (57%). It indicates that television advertising is the primary consumer socialization agent compared to family and peers' influence. The last medium is newspaper and magazine where 27% respondents also selected this medium on how they got to know about this brand.

Next, 57% of respondents stated that they eat at McDonald's once a month and 19% reported eating McDonald's once a week. Surprisingly, there are 3% of respondents that consume this brand's product more than once a week. We already know the answer to this outcome as fast food is the kind of food that can be prepared and served quickly as well as it tastes good which contributes to the frequency of people consuming fast food in their daily lives.

**Table 3.** Customer's Satisfaction Level before COVID-19

	Percentage (%)				
	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
How do you rate your dine-in experience at McDonald's?	0	0	19	45	36
How do you rate your food delivery experience at McDonald's?	0	0	31	44	25
How do you rate your Drive-Thru experience at McDonald's?	1	0	30	39	30
Are you satisfied with McDonald's products?	0	1	27	47	25
Are you satisfied using the McDelivery application?	0	6	34	36	24





Did you feel that our team answered your inquiry promptly?	0	2	38	38	22
Are you satisfied with the way our staff resolve your issue?	0	2	34	39	25
Are you satisfied with the way McDonald's promotes our products on social media?	1	0	14	44	41

Table 3 shows that most of the respondents were satisfied with the features in McDonald's before COVID-19. As much as 81% of respondents rated more than 4, indicating they are satisfied with their dine-in experience at McDonald's. It was found that dining experience attributes such as physical environment positively influenced customer satisfaction which consequently, positively influences behavioral intentions (Canny, 2014). McDonald's has prioritized customer satisfaction by serving their food fast and giving friendly service to the customers as they are concerned about the quality of service.

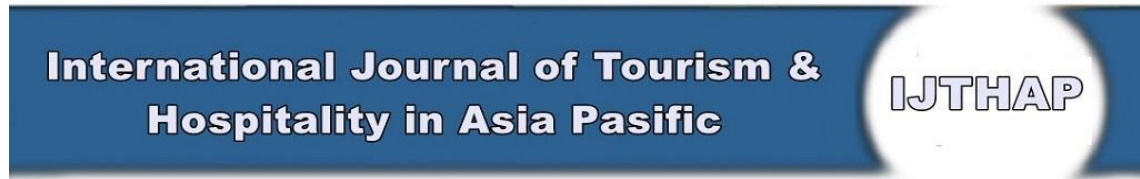
For McDonald's food delivery experience, 69% of respondents rated that they are either satisfied or very satisfied. Due to their hectic lifestyle, the majority of people dislike to wait in lines for food at the restaurant. They would prefer that food comes to them without much effort and to be delivered as fast as possible (Yeo, Goh & Rezaei, 2017). It illustrates that McDonald has offered appropriate and effective food delivery to satisfy customer experiences.

The result of the survey also shows that 69% of respondents gave a rating more than 4 for their drive-thru experience at McDonald's. McDonald's is dedicated to preserve their market leadership and they are confident in their ability to fulfill rising customer demand for a broad range of great-tasting and high-quality meals at any time of day simply by driving through a McDonald's. This illustrates that the customers were pleased with the convenience factor of a drive-thru at McDonald's.

In addition, 72% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the McDonald's product. This shows that customers were pleased with the tasty, high-quality, unique food and beverages. Although McDonald's brand and format are similar worldwide, individual menu offerings and service staff are formulated to suit local tastes. We all know that McDonald's in Malaysia always launches their product offerings based on the changing needs and preferences of their customers.

Furthermore, the result shows that 60% of respondents rated more than 4 marks, indicating that they are either very satisfied or satisfied when using McDelivery application. By ordering food using the McDelivery application, it has helped customers to get their food easily, while influencing customer satisfaction.

Moreover, the result shows that 60% of respondents choose a satisfaction level of more than 4 for the statement "McDonald's team answered your inquiry promptly". For satisfaction with the way McDonald's staff resolved the customer's issue, 64 % of respondents marked more than 4. This indicates that there are still customers who are



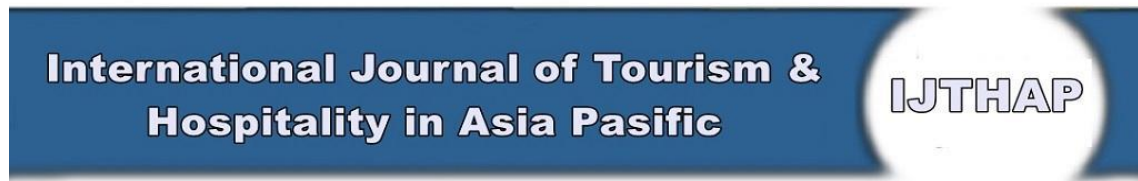
not pleased with how the staff treated them in solving their issues.

The survey shows that 85% of respondents rated more than 4 marks as they are satisfied with how McDonald's promotes products on social media. This shows McDonald used social media to maintain a positive and proactive brand image that satisfies customers.

**Table 4.** Strategy of McDonald's to Improve Customer's Satisfaction During Covid-19

	Percentage%				
	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
<b>Increase the Food and Safety Measure</b>					
Take-away foods are sealed	3	5	11	39	42
Obligation to wear masks before entering McDonald's premises	4	2	7	39	48
Undergoing a temperature check outside the premises	4	2	9	40	45
Sanitise the staffs and customers' hands	4	2	9	37	48
<b>Increase the Number of Food Deliveries</b>					
Increase the number of delivery points nationwide	4	2	15	33	46
Increase the number of McDonald's delivery riders	4	2	16	35	43
<b>Upgrading the Drive-Thru system</b>					
Increase the number of staffs at drive-thru checkpoints	4	3	13	39	41
Varying outdoor digital drive-thru menu displays	4	3	20	39	34
<b>Incorporating Technology</b>					
Cashless & Contactless Scheme	5	3	14	37	41
Upgrading McDelivery application and website	4	3	20	36	37
<b>Maximizing digital marketing</b>					
Campaign videos	4	3	25	38	30
Social Media Engagement (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)	4	3	19	44	30

Post COVID-19 factors include the food and safety measure, number of food deliveries, drive-thru system, incorporating digital and maximizing digital marketing. This segment will discuss the strategies of McDonald's that have an impact on customer satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemics. The respondents are given a scale from Very Dissatisfied to Very Satisfied to indicate their level of satisfaction on the strategies carried out.



#### **Increase the Food and Safety Measure**

Section 1 of Table 4 summarizes the level of customer satisfaction towards increasing the food and safety measure during COVID-19. As much as 81% of respondents responded positively as they are satisfied with how McDonald's sealed the takeaway foods. Next, the survey shows most respondents (87%) are pleased with the requirement to wear a mask before entering McDonald's premises. Furthermore, 85% were satisfied with a temperature check outside McDonald's premises and also satisfied with the rule that requires staff and customers to sanitize their hands before entering McDonald's premises.

We assume respondents were very satisfied with McDonald's food and safety measures. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a sealed packaging is required to prevent virus spread and also to ease consumer concerns. As we know that COVID-19 can spread through an infected person's mouth or nose in small liquid particles when they cough, sneeze, speak, sing or breathe (WHO, 2020). Thus, wearing the mask is mandatory to reduce transmission risk. It is the best strategy as the customer would feel more confident and happier when everyone wears a mask buying McDonald's food. In addition, customers are also very satisfied with McDonald's strategy to help them to maintain good infection control through a customer temperature check and always sanitize staff and customer hands before entering McDonald's premises. It makes most respondents chose this strategy, because McDonald's increases their responsibility to stay healthy and clean as this can show their commitment to preserve a living society. Even facing a global pandemic, McDonald's managed to improve their customer satisfaction.

#### **Increase the Number of Food Deliveries**

Section 2 of Table 4 summarizes the customer satisfaction with the increase in the number of food deliveries during the COVID-19 pandemic. As much as 79% of respondents were well pleased with the increase in the number of delivery points nationwide by McDonald's. Then, an average of 78% of respondents was satisfied with the increase in the number of McDonald's delivery riders.

We know McDonald's has implemented standard operating procedures and increased food and safety measures to reduce COVID-19 transmission risk. Although McDonald's strictly follow the standard operating procedure, the individuals are still likely to be infected. Thus, using delivery service during the COVID-19 pandemic is a viable option to control virus spread. Food delivery services were widely used in Malaysia. The respondents were quite satisfied with the pandemic's increased food delivery. The strategy of increasing the number of delivery points nationwide is brilliant as customers receive their food on time while not being exposed to COVID-19. Also, they are pleased as the number of delivery riders increases. Sayantan Das, Managing Director of Foodpanda said, there was a 7.5% increase in new riders during MCO and a 37% increase in rider applications. Meanwhile, in September, almost 25% of food deliveries were completed by GrabCar drivers and over the period, the platform created earning opportunities for those in need with over 10,000 people joining Grab as drivers and delivery partners (Kamel, 2021). From the statistics, we believe that as customer demand increases, the number of delivery riders also increases. This strategy is effective as McDonald's could satisfy customers wherever they stay on time.



### **Upgrading the Drive-Thru system**

Table 4, section 3 illustrates the customer satisfaction on the upgraded drive-thru system at McDonald's during the COVID-19 pandemic. As much as 80% of 100 respondents were satisfied with the increase in the number of staff at drive-thru checkpoints at McDonald's. Only 73% of respondents were satisfied with the varying outdoor digital drive-thru menu displays at these franchise premises.

Accuracy as well as courtesy are key service components. Customers who receive an incorrect order may be less forgiving, especially if the mistake is not discovered until arrival at the dining destination (Morcos, Tak & Gregoire, 1992). Usually, customers feel annoyed or emotional with the drive-thru system, especially if they have limited time. In addition, some of them may be upset to move to a separate waiting area as their orders are not yet ready. Since the pandemic emerged, most customers prefer to order through the drive-thru lane. It is because picking food from a drive-thru is more hygienic than picking up restaurant food. Therefore, McDonald's can improve service speed by navigating the drive-thru queues with tablets to take orders and payments while keeping social distance. In addition, McDonald's must ensure that all outlets have the varying outdoor digital drive-thru menu displays to display menu items, so that customers from all regions can experience these futuristic features. It will enhance the pickup experience by providing engaging content and directions, especially during the pandemic.

### **Incorporating Technology**

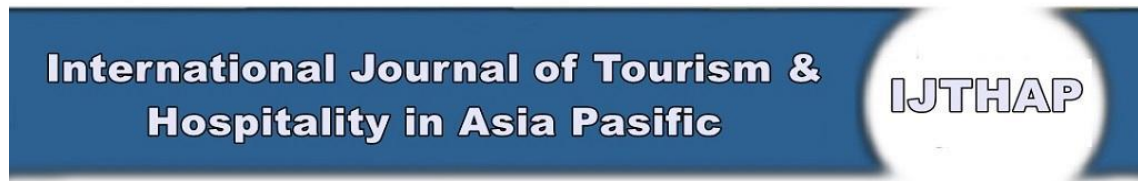
Table 4, section 4 shows the customer satisfaction towards incorporating technology during COVID-19. From the survey, 78% of respondents were satisfied with the cashless and contactless scheme implemented by McDonald's. On the other hand, 73% of respondents were pleased with the McDelivery application and website upgrade during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cashless and contactless payment help to prevent the Covid-19 from spreading. Even the World Health Organization has mentioned, "When possible, it would be advisable to use contactless payments to reduce the risk of transmission" (Finn, 2020). We can conclude that most respondents are happy with the cashless and contactless scheme as they can make their order and pay online via debit (Atm) or credit cards. They willingly used cashless payments to ensure the safety of the staff and customers during the Covid-19 pandemic. The respondents also agree that the McDelivery application and website were upgraded and they were able to place an order easily while having a great application experience. However, some respondents still feel neutral and dissatisfied. Therefore, McDonald's needs to regularly update the McDelivery app and adding more features to the software. It will make the user experience more pleasant. GPS monitoring and real-time alert features, for example, can be added to McDelivery. It helps the customer track their order status.

### **Maximizing Digital Marketing**

Section 5 of Table 4 sums up questions about maximizing McDonald's digital marketing during the pandemic. The result shows an average of 68% were satisfied with the campaign video released by McDonald's on YouTube. Next, during the pandemic, as





much as 74% of respondents were satisfied with social media engagement through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram during the pandemic.

Everything has shifted online due to the pandemic's lockdown and travel restriction. Many fast-food restaurants focused more on creating campaign videos to increase their online presence. We know that McDonald's is the most well-known fast-food brand because of its approach in advertising and marketing. The campaign video made by McDonald's gives a positive long-term brand impact on the customers, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, social media has rapidly become a crucial communication tool for information generation, dissemination and consumption (Tsao, Chen, Tisseverasinghe, Yang, Li, & Butt, 2021). McDonald's also uses social media to project a cheerful and related persona. This fits their strategy of using social media to engage friendly with loyal customers. The survey shows that McDonald's focused on maintaining brand loyalty and current followers through social media. McDonald's can add value to their customer lives, engage with customers, and often upgrade the content to stay new and exciting.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The data gathered from the sample group has given us a lot of information about McDonald's Customer's Satisfaction Strategies during COVID-19 Pandemic in Malaysia. McDonalds was affected by the worldwide epidemic, as we all know, many nations have implemented strict restrictions to prevent it from spreading. Global supply chains are experiencing huge disruptions and having difficulty to adjust the changing expectations (Zhu, Chou & Tsai, 2020). Increasing the Food and Safety Measure, increasing the Number of Food Deliveries, Upgrading the Drive-Thru System, Incorporating Technology and Maximizing Digital Marketing were in Section 4 in our questionnaire, which asked about McDonald's strategy to enhance customer satisfaction during COVID-19.

The respondents are most satisfied with the Food and Safety Measure since based on the findings, an average of 81% respondents reacted affirmatively, indicating that they are happy with McDonald's seal takeaway foods. The majority of respondents (87%) are satisfied with the obligation to wear a mask before entering McDonald's premises according to the study. Masks are an important tool for preventing transmission and saving lives. Masks can be used to protect healthy people or to prevent forward transmission, depending on the type of mask (WHO, 2020). Then, 85% of respondents were happy with passing through a temperature check outside of McDonald's and with the fact that employees and customers must clean their hands before entering the restaurant.

In conclusion, McDonald's can yet withstand the devastating effects of the COVID-19 virus that has swept the globe as customers have given them an outstanding overall rating after this brand implemented various strategies. Every McDonald's restaurant follows strict food safety guidelines to ensure the hygiene of the food is guaranteed. Food safety and quality management procedures based on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point principles are part of McDonald's Operations and Training Program. Furthermore, in 2019, McDonald's updated their restaurant food safety auditing



requirements, as well as our food safety and quality audit recommendations for suppliers. (McDonald's.com, 2020). In conclusion, the research has been carried out successfully in determining the most effective strategy of McDonald's to increase customer's satisfaction level during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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