



CUSTOMER LOYALTY: THE EFFECT OF SERVICE QUALITY AND BRAND IMAGE IN MALAYSIA'S AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY



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ABSTRACT

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This paper aims to examine the relationship between customer loyalty, service quality and brand image after sales at national automotive service centers in Malaysia. The study used a quantitative method and was completed using a SERVQUAL model. The questionnaire was answered by 311 respondents. It was discovered that brand image and customer loyalty was determined by the customers' perception of the service quality provided by the automotive service centers in terms of technical quality and customer service. The study found a strong correlation between customer loyalty, brand image, and the service quality which includes two elements such as technical quality and customer service. It was discovered that there is a significant relationship between customer loyalty, service quality and brand image. Customer loyalty was affected by service quality and brand image at the service centers by 87%. The study highlights the intangible dimensions of customer loyalty in relations between service quality and brand image.

Contribution/ Originality: This study contributes to the existing literature on customer behavior in automotive industry. Technical quality and customer service were found to be important factors that influenced customer loyalty and brand image. Findings of the study enable researchers to share customer perspectives and insights after sales in term of customer behavior.

1. INTRODUCTION

Malaysia's first national car which was produced by Proton was introduced back in 1985 (Ismail & Abu, 2013; Mustafa, 2020). With its cheaper price and low maintenance compared to other models, Proton and Perodua were able to dominate Malaysian and foreign markets (Othman, Sundram, Sayuti, & Bahrin, 2016). These companies aim to produce affordable and high-quality brands to cater to a broader range of incomes among Malaysians. In the early years when the cars were first introduced, Malaysia were able to get the highest sales among ASEAN countries but has now fallen to third place. Unfortunately, over the years the demand for Malaysian cars has declined due to stiff competition from other foreign car models and other factors (Jawi, Kassim, Isa, Hamzah, & Ghani, 2016; Wan-Nadiah, Musa, Muda, & Hassan, 2016).

A considerable amount of research has been conducted to study the relationship between perceived price, service quality, brand image, and customer satisfaction (Witama & Keni, 2020). The research concluded that those

variables have a positive effect on customer satisfaction. However, little attention has been given consideration in determining the relationship between customer loyalty, service quality (technical quality and customer service) and brand image after sales at the service centers. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the effect of customer loyalty and service quality toward brand image in the national automotive industry in Malaysia. The study would investigate customer experience after sales at service centers around Malaysia. This research could help the national automotive industry to improve its performance in order to gain back customer attention and trust, and also to increase sales. To increase sales, the automotive industry must gain customers' loyalty and satisfaction.

In gaining customers' loyalty and satisfaction, and also to gain a wider market, national automotive suppliers must ensure that they are providing a higher quality of customer services in order to ensure customers loyalty. In any service industry, customer loyalty is crucial as it will determine the growth or the collapse of a brand. Thus, understanding customer loyalty is very important for any business to succeed. To succeed, the automotive industry must prioritize matters such as customer loyalty and service quality. Customer loyalty is very important because it can attract new customers and retain current customers (Subaebasni, Risnawaty, & Wicaksono, 2018). Previous studies have proven that service quality is a crucial factor in getting customers' loyalty (Budianto, 2019; Pei, 2011). With rapid globalization and technology, there are certain elements in service quality that need to be considered in order to enhance customer loyalty.

Customer loyalty is a pivotal matter that needs to be highly considered especially when it comes to the automotive industry. This is because in the automotive industry, customers are involved in longer term relationships with the company (Kun-His, 2012; Nyadzayo & Khajezadeh, 2016). Therefore, the industry must provide a high quality of customer service to support their brand image. This will create opportunities to attract new customers and expand the market. Witama and Keni (2020) affirmed that customer loyalty comes when they are satisfied with good service which will create a good brand image that will stay in the mind of the customers.

Customer satisfaction in terms of service quality will eventually lead to customer loyalty. This will hopefully deter customers from switching to another automotive brand. It was reported that 27% of consumers switched to different brands as the national automotive companies did not meet their expectations. They also mentioned that they did not receive good or high-quality customer service when dealing with the national automotive businesses (Alqasa, Ho-Tuck, & Md Isa, 2017). When the customers are satisfied with the service quality, it will lead to brand loyalty. Customers who are satisfied with certain brands tend to stick with that one brand unless they are not happy with the quality of service that they received (Witama & Keni, 2020).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty means that customers decide to consistently use the same brand because they like the services that they receive or the product quality (Subaebasni et al., 2018). To be loyal means that the products or services that they have received meet their expectations. Loyalty has a significant relationship with customer satisfaction and the product that they choose. Customer satisfaction is based on the service quality that they have received while dealing with the automotive suppliers and service centers (Wan-Nadiah et al., 2016). Witama and Keni (2020) pointed out that customer satisfaction refers to customer fulfillment in terms of performance of the products, services, features, and the experience in getting the products and the after sales experience. When they buy cars from Proton or Perodua, they expect that they will receive cars with a certain performance worth the price that they have paid. Proton and Perodua offer cheaper automotive models to fit the needs of Malaysians especially the ones with lower incomes. With Proton and Perodua, more people could afford to own cars for the convenience of their families. To attract customers, keep them loyal and prevent them from switching to different brands, the

service centers must play its important role in ensuring that all the services provided after sales are of the highest standards.

Customer loyalty is pivotal in determining the future of the national automotive industry. According to [Baktash and Abdul Talib \(2019\)](#) the survival of a company depends on its customers' loyalty. The bigger the customer loyalty, the longer and farther the company can spread its wings in the market. The company will have the opportunity to have a bigger market share and be able to stay in the competitive market a lot longer. They further explained that customer loyalty goes beyond what people usually think. The aim is to focus on customers' satisfaction and improving the quality of customer services at all service centers in Malaysia. By using the customer relationship management (CRM) approach, Proton and Perodua could offer better quality of services, enhance customer satisfaction and at the same time maintain customers' loyalty toward brand image ([Galvao, Carvalho, Oliveira, & Medeiros, 2018](#)). In enhancing customer satisfaction, Proton has come out with a strategy called "Voice of Customer" and Customer Priority Index (CPI). These channels would help facilitate critical and quality issues faced by the customers in a timely manner. Previous studies have proven that any services that care about customer feedback will lead to customer loyalty ([Abdullah & Aziz, 2019](#)). If the customers are satisfied with the products or services, they would repurchase the products, recommend it to family and friends and compliment it through word of mouth. With current trends and technology, they are even willing to share their positive experience on social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. This will give a boost on the product's sales like ripples in water. [Budianto \(2019\)](#) affirmed that loyalty is more established among products that involve longer relationships such as after sales services compared to the one-off products. Reliable services create trust which plays an important part in establishing customer loyalty.

2.2. Service Quality

In any businesses, service quality is an important criterion in determining customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is when the service given to the customers meet or exceed customers' expectations ([Subaebasni et al., 2018](#)). Previous studies have showed that service quality has a positive relationship with customer satisfaction ([Baber, 2019](#)). On the same note, [Othman et al. \(2016\)](#) explained that customer satisfaction is when the standards in terms of price, quality and service meet their expectations. [Othman et al. \(2016\)](#) further explained that in order to meet expectations and stay competitive, service centers must adopt a "just-in-time purchasing" technique. The technique allows service centers to purchase high quality automotive parts, have competitive prices and to provide reliable services to the customers. This way customers do not have to wait long to get their car parts. It is imperative for service centers to pay attention to the quality of its services, as it is one of the survival factors for businesses especially in the service industry ([Kun-His, 2012](#)). Service centers also must ensure that the quality of services after sales must reach certain standards to meet the customers' expectations as it will affect customer satisfaction and loyalty ([Putra & Idris, 2020](#)). Since buying a car involves a long-term relationship between customers and automotive producers, these companies aim to focus on creating better value for its customers and trying to minimize dissatisfaction. In this situation, customers are more than willing to choose national cars over imported cars since national car producers could provide excellent services with reasonable prices to them ([Che Wel, Alam, Khalid, & Mokhtaruddin, 2018](#)). Proton and Perodua strive to provide their customers with excellent service during the sales and after sales services at their service centers. This helps the companies to retain and attract new customers ([Wan-Nadiah et al., 2016](#)).

In the research conducted by [Budianto \(2019\)](#) he stated that there are several elements of service quality that should be taken into account such as attitudes, professionalism, skills, responsiveness, facilities, reliability, credibility, reputation, accessibility and service recovery. All those elements will give huge impacts to customers' satisfaction with the standard of service quality provided by the service centers. He emphasized that these elements would determine the level of customers' satisfaction and could attract more customers which is good for businesses.

It is necessary to understand and foresee customers' needs in the products and service offers. Among all the elements mentioned above, this research would focus on service quality in terms of two elements that are based on the SERVQUAL model which are technical quality and customer service.

In technical quality and customer service, the research discovered that most service centers provide convenience waiting rooms for the customers to sit and wait while their vehicles were being serviced or repaired. The facilities were clean and well maintained. All of the service centers were equipped with Wi-fi, coffee and tea sections, restrooms, televisions, and reading materials. The service centers also offered high quality and reliable products and services as per customers' expectations. The concept is using the customer relationship approach, that is to maintain service quality and customer relations at all Proton and Perodua service centers. Most of the customers responded that they are satisfied with the quality of services received at the service centers. By making sure that the customers are well taken care of and satisfied with after sales services, these automotive producers can ensure customers' loyalty toward its brand image (Galvao et al., 2018).

Technical quality means to focus on time; that is the expectation is to finish the services as promised to the customers, the parts that are available at the service centers (Zakaria, Hussin, Batau, & Zakaria, 2010). The parts and services offered are affordable and in good quality. When the customers need certain parts, it is easily available. If they have to order the part in order to get it, normally the part will come within the range of time as promised. The customers seem to be happy and satisfied with the services that they received at the service centers. There are small issues when the parts that they ordered came later than promised. At the service centers, it is the manager's responsibility to ensure that the quality of the services that they provided meet the expectations of the customers in order to maintain customer loyalty (Alqasa et al., 2017).

Customer service is another element in the SERVQUAL model that would be used to measure the relationship of customers' loyalty and service quality in this research. In this research, customer service means the attitudes and willingness of the employees in dealing with the customers at the service centers. It is the way customers are treated when they come to get their cars repaired, when they come to get replacement car parts or any other services needed for their vehicles. It means the willingness of the employees at the service centers to help the customers to get what they need for their vehicles and be able to provide good service as customers' expectations. It would include the skills, knowledge and courtesy in dealing with the customers at the service centers (Zakaria et al., 2010). Service quality includes customer perception about the brand image whether it is worth buying it or re-purchase it Subaebasni et al. (2018). The attitudes and willingness of the employees to go above and beyond expectations have impressed the customers to keep coming back to the same service center. It helps to enhance customer satisfaction, retain current customers and attract the new ones. At the time, these attitudes help the service centers expand their business (Abdullah & Aziz, 2019; Baber, 2019).

2.3. Brand Image

Brand image is a pivotal tool for a company in order to retain their loyal customers (Saleem & Raja, 2014). In their research, Witama and Keni (2020) defined brand image, as products that have characteristics loved by consumers. They described that brand image as something that could impinge the mind of consumers. Brand image is the most treasured asset because the brand itself reflects the performance of one's company. Brand image also could create positive perceptions among the customers and create customer loyalty (Riyadi, 2019). With its brand, Proton and Perodua have contributed significantly to the automotive industry in Malaysia (Yap, Abdullah, Abdul-Rahman, & Tan, 2018). Since the establishment of Proton and Perodua, these two brands have been the pride of Malaysians. In 1997, Perodua has taken this a step further by introducing energy efficient vehicles – EEV (Mansor, 2018). The idea is to produce automobiles that minimizes its impact on the environment.

Another element that determines customer loyalty is the experience during the sales of the vehicles and the way they were treated. These experiences eventually will determine whether the customer will remain loyal to the

same brand or will decide to switch to a different brand (Alqasa et al., 2017). Saleem and Raja (2014) affirmed that brand image will come into customers minds based on their previous experiences. For this reason, it is imperative for the service centers to make sure they are providing tip top facilities, professional and skillful staff that can respond to the needs of the customers. The study found that there are the service centers that provide extended hours to cater to the needs and the convenience of the customers. The customers were thrilled at the extended hours because of the convenience. They affirmed that they love the national brand because it offered an affordable price.

In addition, both Proton and Perodua have unveiled new SUV models in 2020. These models were designed to adapt to local needs and have many advanced features and technologies which attracted many customers the day it was launched. Combined with the latest high-end technology and cheaper prices, the newest model, Proton X50 has gained a good amount of fame and became the talk of the nation (Misran, Roslin, & Mohd. Nur, 2020). The SUV model is equipped with auto park assist features where the car can park on its own. This kind of feature has attracted so many customers especially the women. Proton has received 20,000 bookings within its first two weeks since the order for booking was opened (Shah, 2020). The customers love the cars and are satisfied with the services provided by Proton. Those who switched to different brands of cars claimed that they switched because of their higher resale value. According to Che Wel et al. (2018) another factor that helps customers to stay loyal with these brands is patriotism, that is buying a local product. They affirmed that in their studies they discovered that there is a strong relationship between consumer purchasing behavior and patriotism. Malaysian society is proud of these brands. When it comes to choosing a car, these brands will be the top in the list of Malaysian households. Recent partnership with Geely from China has helped Proton re-create a new plan in meeting customers' expectation and Malaysian market demand. The plan has strengthened the existing brand image and caused the sales to increase significantly. The brands have become more competitive than ever in the automotive industry. It is proved when Proton has reported to increase its sales by 33.6% in September 2020 this year after the company produced its SUV models, X70 and X50 (Tan, 2020). The Malaysian government also played an important role in promoting this brand image.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study was using a quantitative method that is a questionnaire. The questionnaire is using the SERVQUAL model to measure the relationship between customer loyalty, service quality, and brand image after sales in service centers in Malaysia. The questionnaire from customer loyalty was adapted from Cater and Cater (2009); Wong and Sohal (2003) and Fiol, Bigne Alcaniz, Moliner Tena, and Garcia (2009) service quality was adapted from Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988); Wong and Sohal (2003); Cronin Jr, Brady, and Hult (2000) and brand image was adapted from Kim and Kim (2005). The questionnaire was distributed among Malaysians who are currently enrolled as part-time students at Universiti Sains Malaysia. These students come from different backgrounds and currently working in different states in Malaysia. The respondents were given two weeks' time to complete the questionnaire. Since previous research has contributed to the literature in pre-sales, this research is attempting a novel method by conducting post-sales research in regards to customers' experience at the service centers. The questionnaire was distributed to a total of 385 respondents but in the end, only 311 can be used in the research. The other 74 questionnaires were either returned incomplete or were not returned at all. The respondents are the customers at service centers around Malaysia. The response rate was 80.78%.

3.1. Research Variables

The study was focused on the three main variables of service quality, brand image, and customer loyalty as illustrated in the conceptual model Figure 1. The independent variables are service quality and brand image, while the dependent variable is customer loyalty.

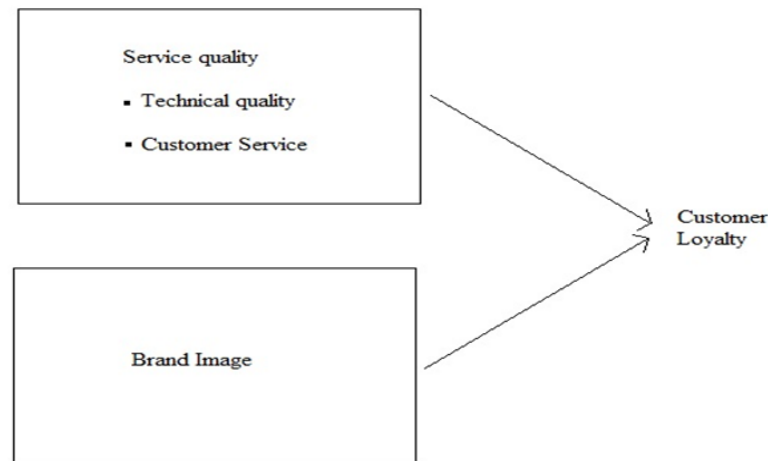


Figure-1. Conceptual model.

3.2. Results

3.2.1. Analysis

The analysis that was conducted by using frequency analysis, reliability analysis, descriptive analysis, Pearson Correlation analysis and Simple Linear regression analysis. Frequency analysis is used to gather information on the respondents' profile. Reliability analysis is conducted to measure the reliability and quality of the instrument used in this study. Descriptive analysis is conducted to examine the respondents' perceptions toward the variables of the study [customer loyalty, service quality (technical quality and customer service) and brand image]. Pearson Correlation analysis is used to measure the correlation between two or more variables. Simple Linear Regression is statistical method to show the relationship between the variables. The results of the analysis are discussed as follows.

3.3. Profile of the Respondents

The profile of the respondents consists of age, gender, highest level of qualification, average monthly income and average total bill charged for the service maintenance or repair. The result of the respondents' profile is presented in Table 1, Figure 2 and 3.

Table-1. Profile of the Respondents.

Demographic Variables	Categories	No. of Respondents	Valid Percentage (%)
Age	17-25 years old	47	15.1
	26-35 years old	195	62.7
	36-45 years old	64	20.6
	46-55 years old	5	1.6
Gender	Male	132	42.4
	Female	179	57.6
Level of Education	SPM / STPM	98	31.5
	Diploma	193	62.1
	Degree	20	6.4
Monthly income	Below than RM1000	1	0.3
	RM1001 – RM3000	208	66.9
	RM3001 – RM5000	77	24.8
	More than RM5000	21	6.8
	No income	4	1.3
Average total bill charged for the service maintenance or repair	Below than RM200	42	13.5
	RM201 – RM300	149	47.9
	RM301 – RM400	92	29.6
	More than RM400	28	9.0

The results show that the majority of the respondents who participated in this study are from 26 to 35 years old (62.7%) and most of them are female (57.6%). As for highest level of qualification, majority of the respondents hold a Diploma (62.1%). Besides, most of the respondents earn an average monthly income between RM1001 to RM3000 (66.9%). With regards to the average total bill charged for the service maintenance or repair, the majority of the respondents choose between RM201 to RM300 (47.9%).

3.3. Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis was carried out to ensure that the instrument used in this study is stable and consistent. This study has four variables as the independent variables (Brand Image, Technical Quality and Customer Service) and one variable as the dependent variable (Customer Loyalty). As shown in Table 2, the results indicated that all the variables have strong consistency reliability where Cronbach's Alpha values are more than .90.

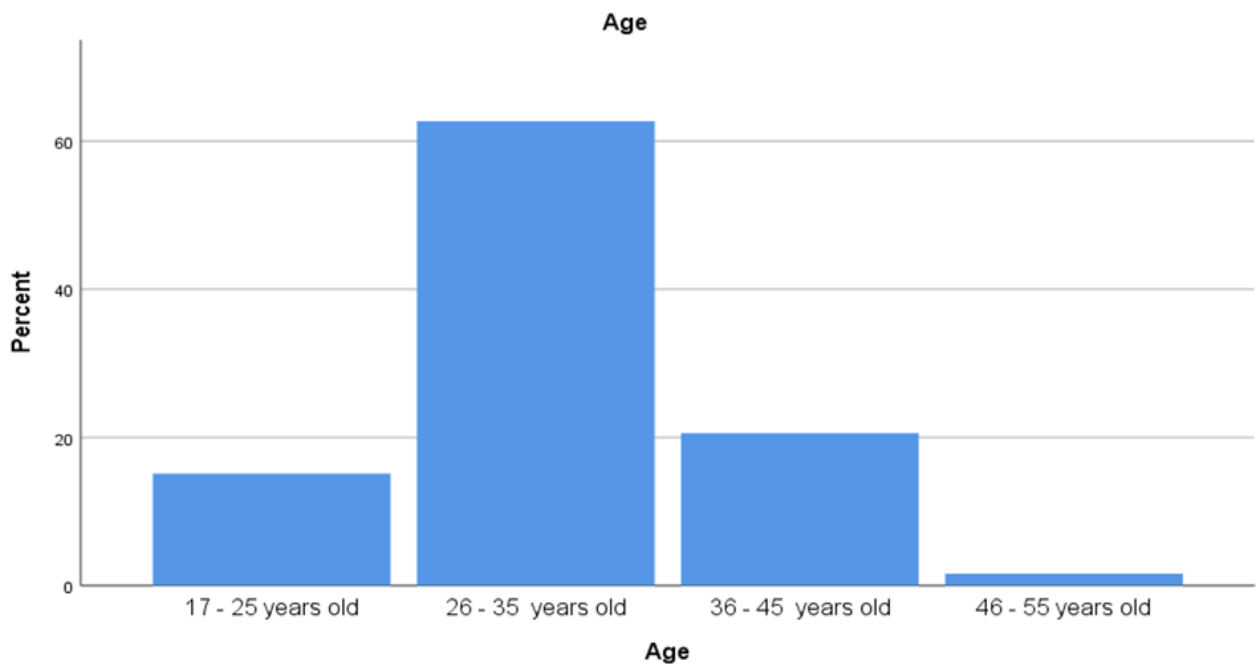


Figure-2. Age of the Respondents.

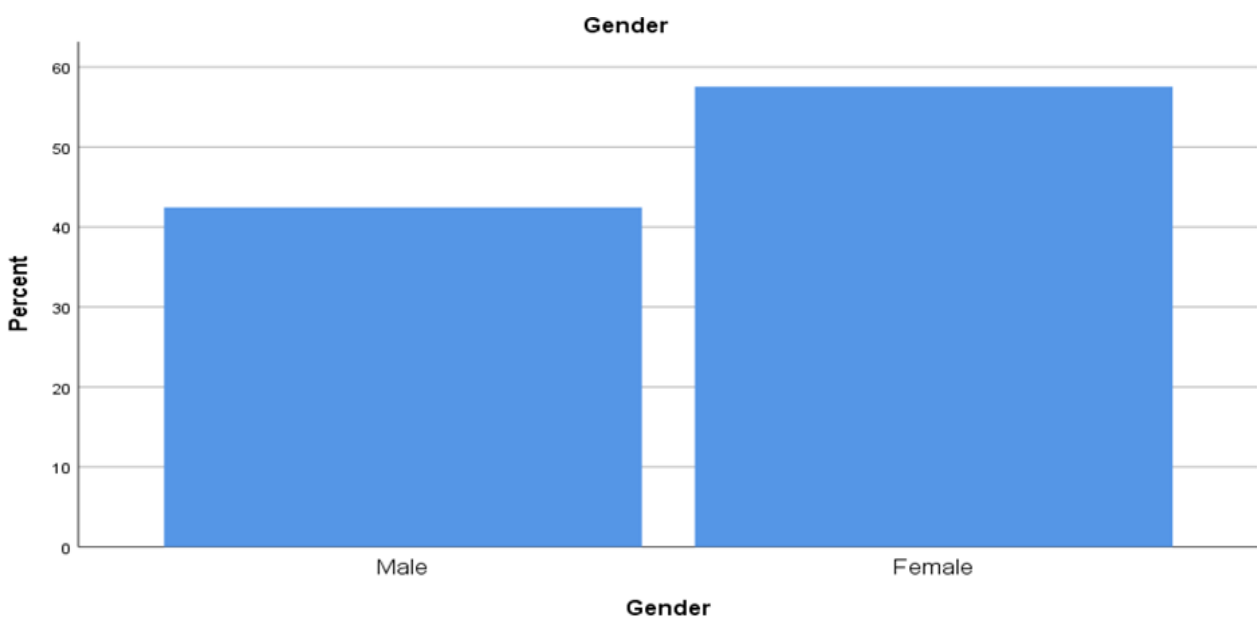


Figure-3. Gender of the Respondents.

Table-2. Reliability analysis.

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Customer Loyalty	0.949	7
Brand Image	0.957	7
Technical Quality	0.939	5
Customer Service	0.969	17

3.4. Means Scores

All the study variables were constructed on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree). The result of the mean scores for all the variables were perceived as high by the respondents as shown in Table 3. The result clearly shows that the mean score for brand image had statistically higher scores than other variables which indicated there is a strong relationship between customer loyalty and brand image.

Table-3. Mean Scores and Standard Deviation for the Study Variables.

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Results
Customer Loyalty	5.25	1.11681	High
Brand Image	5.40	1.06212	High
Technical Quality	5.34	1.08809	High
Customer Service	5.18	0.98268	High

3.5. Customer Loyalty

To gather the respondents' response toward the Customer Loyalty, descriptive analysis was conducted. The result in Table 4 shows that the three highest items scored by the respondents are (1) I say positive things about the service provider to other people (Mean = 5.47; SD = 1.228), (2) I recommend the service provider to someone who seeks my advice (Mean = 5.47; SD = 1.166) and (3) I encourage friends and relatives to service and repair their car at this service centre (Mean = 5.37; SD = 1.214).

Table-4. Respondents' response on customer loyalty.

Items		Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Loyalty1	I say positive things about the service provider to other people	1	7	5.47	1.228
Loyalty2	I recommend the service provider to someone who seeks my advice	1	7	5.47	1.166
Loyalty3	I encourage friends and relatives to service and repair their car at this service center	1	7	5.37	1.214
Loyalty4	I consider this service center as my first choice in the next visit	1	7	5.37	1.235
Loyalty5	I have a very strong relationship with this service provider	1	7	5.23	1.236
Loyalty6	The chances for me to stay in this relationship are very good	1	7	5.29	1.237
Loyalty7	I do not mind paying more in exchange for a good relationship with this company	1	7	4.54	1.573

3.6. Brand Image

The respondents' response toward the brand image were also gathered through descriptive analysis. Table 5 shows that the three highest items scored by the respondents are (1) This organization and their brand are familiar to me (Mean = 5.61; SD = 1.199), (2) The product/brand is well established (Mean = 5.59; SD = 1.109) and (3) This organization has a luxurious image (Mean = 5.43; SD = 1.147).

Table-5. Respondents' response on brand image.

Items		Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Image1	This organization has a long history	1	7	5.34	1.185
Image2	This organization and their brand are familiar to me	1	7	5.61	1.199
Image3	This organization has a differentiated image from other car manufacturer brands	1	7	5.35	1.170
Image4	I feel special when visiting this company	1	7	5.33	1.237
Image5	Service is sometimes excessive to me	1	7	5.14	1.280
Image6	This organization has a luxurious image	1	7	5.43	1.147
Image7	The product/brand is well established	2	7	5.59	1.109

3.7. Pearson Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis is carried out to determine the linear relationship between variables that used an ordinal scale such as the Likert type scale (Chua, 2012). A significant relationship between the variables identified by the p value was obtained from the analysis while the r value determines the degree of relationship between these variables. The relationship between the variables is significant if the p value is less than .05. The degree of the relationship between the variables is determined by the r value as shown in Table 6. The results of the Pearson Correlation analysis for this study are presented in Table 7. The results showed that the dependent variable Customer Loyalty correlated significantly with all the independent variables (Brand Image, Technical Quality, Customer Service and Quality Service ($p = 0.00$). The results also show that the relationship between the dependant variable and all the independent variables are strong and very strong ($r = 0.921$, $r = 0.826$, $r = 0.844$ and $r = 0.860$ respectively).

Table-6. The Degree of the Relationship.

r Value	Degree of the Relationship
0.91 to 1.00 or -0.91 to -1.00	Very strong
0.71 to 0.90 or -0.71 to -0.90	Strong
0.51 to 0.70 or -0.51 to -0.70	Moderate
0.31 to 0.50 or -0.31 to -0.50	Weak
0.01 to 0.30 or -0.01 to -0.30	Very weak
0.00	No correlation

Source: Chua (2012).

Table-7. Pearson correlation analysis.

		Customer Loyalty	Brand Image	Technical Quality	Customer Service	Quality Service
Customer Loyalty	Correlation Coefficient	1	0.921**	0.826**	0.844**	0.860**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	311	311	311	311	311
Brand Image	Correlation Coefficient	0.921**	1	0.818**	0.838**	0.853**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	311	311	311	311	311
Technical Quality	Correlation Coefficient	0.826**	0.818**	1	0.877**	0.928**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000
	N	311	311	311	311	311
Customer Service	Correlation Coefficient	0.844**	0.838**	0.877**	1	0.993**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.000
	N	311	311	311	311	311
Service Quality	Correlation Coefficient	0.860**	0.853**	0.928**	0.993**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	N	311	311	311	311	311

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

3.8. Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Simple linear regression is a statistical method used to identify the relationships between two or more variables by showing that the changes in the independent variable contribute to the change in the dependent variable. Based on the results of simple linear regression in Table 8, it shown that there is a significant relationship between the independent variables (Customer Service, Technical Quality and Brand Image) and the dependent variable (Customer Loyalty) ($p < 0.01$). The R^2 of 0.870 shows that 87% of the variance in Customer Loyalty were explained by Customer Service, Technical Quality and Brand Image.

Table-8. Simple Linear Regression.

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)		
Customer Service	0.077	0.022	0.164	3.442	0.001
Technical Quality	0.177	0.065	0.123	2.734	0.007
Brand Image	0.718	0.042	0.683	17.173	0.000
R = .933 R ² = .870 Adjusted R ² = .869					

Note: Dependent Variable: Customer Loyalty.

4. CONCLUSION

The study discovered that brand image and customer loyalty was determined by the customers' perception of the service quality provided by the automotive service centers in terms of technical quality and customer service. The study discovered that most of the customers agreed that the companies and their brands are familiar to them, the products/brands are well established and they said positive things about the service centers to other people. The majority of the customers believed that the spare parts from the service centers are original and of good quality and that the good service work provided by the service centers have helped to raise the company's image. The service centers always provide accurate information (itemized invoices) to the customers.

The customers also shared their good experiences such as how the service centers use appropriate tools and documents when providing services to customers. The service centers provide a clean and comfortable space to the customers. The staff are consistently courteous with them, respectful and polite. The attitudes and skills of the staff at the service centers make the customers feel confident in doing business with the brand.

The study found a strong correlation between customer loyalty, brand image, and the service quality which includes two elements such as technical quality and customer service. Most of the customers are satisfied with their experience at service centers in Malaysia. In conclusion, the study discovered that customers are satisfied with their post-sale experience at the service centers.

5. DISCUSSION

The study provides evidence that service quality which leads to customer satisfaction, has a strong relationship with customer loyalty and brand image. The study has provided information about customer purchasing behaviour, company performance and Malaysian society.

Most people believe that the top brands provide the best quality for them even though they have to pay high prices for their products. But since its partnership with Geely from China, Proton has proven that the company can stand in the same ranks as any other imported automotive brand name in terms of quality and brand image. Proton and Perodua made a significant comeback by introducing new models with intelligent features that attract most Malaysian citizens. Not far behind its sister, Perodua has also released new car models to cater to the needs of the citizens and the market demand.

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