BRAND POSITIONING METHODS OF RESTAURANTS IN KAZAKHSTAN

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the research. The primary aim of this study was to develop a comprehensive model that investigates the relationships between selected Brand Positioning Efforts—namely Price, Place, and Promotion—and the development of Brand Equity. The research focused on assessing the mediating role of three key dimensions of Brand Equity: Perceived Quality, Brand Loyalty, and Brand Awareness/Image, in establishing a connection between the independent and dependent variables.

Methodology. The study was conducted within the restaurant market in Almaty, Kazakhstan, using data collected from online questionnaires distributed to customers who had recently visited a restaurant in the city. The sample data were analyzed through a structural equation modeling approach to test twelve hypotheses that posited positive relationships among the variables.

Originality/Value of the research. This research provides significant insights into the factors that influence Brand Equity in a developing market context. By highlighting the importance of Place and Price over Promotion in building Brand Equity, the study offers practical implications for marketers within the restaurant industry and beyond, contributing to the body of knowledge on strategic brand positioning.

Findings. The findings indicated that Place and Price play critical roles in the process of building Brand Equity in the Kazakhstani restaurant market, while Promotion did not exhibit a significant influence. Place demonstrated the strongest positive impact on Perceived Quality, Brand Loyalty, and Brand Awareness/Image, followed by Price. The results emphasize that restaurants in Almaty should prioritize physical location and pricing strategies to effectively build Brand Equity.

Keywords: Brand Equity, Brand Positioning Efforts, Place, Price, Promotion.

INTRODUCTION

Research Background. In today's fiercely competitive market, product differentiation based on materials, structure, or composition is no longer sufficient. Instead, products are compared with those of competitors, and companies must use positioning strategies to stand out in customers' minds [1]. This study focuses on the restaurant market in Almaty and examines how Brand Positioning Efforts (Price, Place, and Promotion) influence overall brand assets through their dimensions (perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand awareness/brand image).

Purpose and Significance of the Study. This study investigates how Brand Positioning Efforts, including Price, Place, and Promotion, impact brand asset value in Almaty's restaurant industry. Brand assets are crucial in competitive markets, comprising perceived quality, loyalty, awareness, and image [2]. The study aims to understand how marketing activities influence these dimensions and overall brand assets. It addresses the lack of information on such influences in the restaurant industry, highlighting the potential benefits of strong branding, like increased loyalty and profitability [1]. By examining the effects on perceived quality, loyalty, and awareness/image, the study aims to guide restaurant managers in crafting effective brand strategies for competitive advantage.

Research Question. The research question of this study is, "How do Brand Positioning Efforts influence the brand assets of restaurants in Almaty?" The study hypothesizes that Price has a positive impact on perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand awareness/brand image, thereby positively affecting overall brand as-

sets. Similarly, the study hypothesizes that Place and Promotion have positive effects on the three dimensions of brand assets and overall brand assets.

Methodology. This study adopts a quantitative research design and collects data using structured questionnaires administered to customers of selected restaurants in Almaty. The questionnaire measures the four elements of brand assets and the marketing mix of price, location, and promotion. Structural equation modeling (SEM) is used to analyze the data and test the research hypotheses. The findings of the study will contribute to existing literature on brand assets and their determinants and provide valuable insights for developing successful brand strategies in the restaurant industry in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Domestic and International Research Status. The restaurant industry, pivotal for global economies, has evolved remarkably in the 21st century [3,4], offering diverse dietary choices from primitive origins to modern complexities [5]. In this competitive landscape, establishments vie for distinction through superior service and quality [6]. Brand positioning, crucial for differentiation, enhances loyalty, awareness, and sales [7]. Previous research underscores the mediating role of brand assets—perceived quality, loyalty, and awareness/image—linking brand positioning to overall brand value [8].

Abroad, extensive research emphasizes effective brand positioning's significance in brand building [9], stressing factors like product quality, price, and promotion's impact on brand assets.

In Kazakhstan, research on brand positioning's impact on brand assets is scant, particularly within the restaurant sector. Almaty's restaurant market, divided into high-end, mid-range, and low-end/fast-food segments, reflects diverse consumer preferences and economic realities. The high-end segment caters to a niche clientele, while mid-range restaurants thrive on events and business lunches. Low-end/fast-food outlets dominate, attracting a youthful demographic [10].

Amidst growing competition, brand positioning is paramount for Almaty's restaurants to distinguish themselves and bolster brand assets. Cuisine specialization shapes target markets, pricing, and promotions, driving differentiation [10].

Main Contents of the Study. This study investigates the impact of price, location, and promotion on restaurant brand assets in Almaty. Hypotheses explore the positive influence of price positioning. Additionally, it examines how location and promotional efforts shape brand assets [11].

This research fills a gap in Kazakhstani literature, offering insights to aid Almaty's restaurants in optimizing brand positioning and enhancing brand assets. Key areas include pricing, location selection, and promotional strategies to sustain demand and competitiveness.

Hypotheses

This study examines how marketing mix elements – specifically Price, Place, and Promotion—affect Overall Brand Equity, which is a combination of Perceived Quality, Brand Loyalty, Brand Awareness, and Brand Image (see figure 1). These components are critical for a company's performance, as strengthening them enhances Overall Brand Equity. The model used in this study draws from the work of Yoo et al. [9] and Kim [8], emphasizing the impact of marketing efforts on Brand Equity, despite differences in terminology.
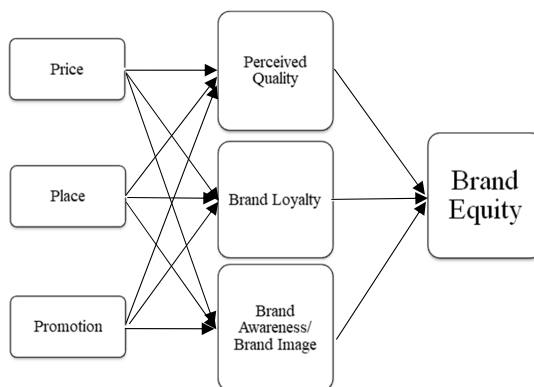

Figure 1 – Structural model: positioning efforts and brand equity
Note – drawn by the authors

Positioning Activities and Brand Equity Elements. Various scholars, including Aaker [2], Keller [12], and Yoo et al. [9], argue that almost every marketing effort, whether successful or not, aims to create, manage, and leverage brand equity. The marketing mix, traditionally composed of the four Ps – Product, Price, Place, and Promotion – has been modified in this study to exclude Product, focusing instead on the other three elements.

Price. Research suggests a positive correlation between higher prices and higher perceived quality, supporting the idea that as prices increase, so does the perceived quality of a brand [13,14]. This leads to the first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1a: There is a positive relationship between Price and Perceived Quality.

While Yoo et al. [9] found no significant relationship between price and brand loyalty or awareness, this study proposes testing the effect of price on brand loyalty and awareness [15,16], hypothesizing:

Hypothesis 1b: There is a positive relationship between Price and Brand Loyalty.

Hypothesis 1c: There is a positive relationship between Price and Brand Awareness/Brand Image.

Place. In the marketing mix, Place refers to product positioning and ensuring timely, undamaged delivery to customers. In a restaurant setting, this includes ambiance, service quality, and food delivery. A positive store image is correlated with perceived quality [13,17], suggesting that a good location can enhance customer satisfaction and brand loyalty [14], leading to the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2a: There is a positive relationship between Place and Perceived Quality.

Hypothesis 2b: There is a positive relationship between Place and Brand Loyalty.

Hypothesis 2c: There is a positive relationship between Place and Brand Awareness/Brand Image.

Promotion. Promotion encompasses activities like advertising, personal selling, and public relations. Previous studies have shown that while advertising positively impacts brand equity, promotion does not [18]. However, heavy investment in advertising often signals product quality to consumers [18], leading to the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3a: There is a positive relationship between Promotion and Perceived Quality.

Hypothesis 3b: There is a positive relationship between Promotion and Brand Loyalty.

Hypothesis 3c: There is a positive relationship between Promotion and Brand Awareness/Brand Image.

Brand Equity Elements and Overall Brand Equity. Brand Equity, defined as the incremental value added to a product by its brand name, results from its four dimensions: Perceived Quality, Brand Loyalty, Brand Awareness, and Brand Image. Each of these dimensions positively influences Overall Brand Equity [9].

Perceived Quality. Perceived quality is an individual's judgment of a product's overall superiority [19]. High perceived quality indicates long-term positive experiences with the brand, leading to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: There is a positive relationship between Perceived Quality and Brand Equity.

Brand Loyalty. Brand loyalty reflects a customer's attachment to a brand [2], driving repeat purchases and resistance to switching. Thus, it contributes significantly to brand equity:

Hypothesis 5: There is a positive relationship between Brand Loyalty and Brand Equity.

Brand Awareness and Brand Image. Brand awareness and brand image, often combined in models, reflect the associations and recognition consumers have of a brand. Positive brand associations simplify consumer decision-making, leading to the final hypothesis:

Hypothesis 6: There is a positive relationship between Brand Awareness/Brand Image and Brand Equity.

MAIN BODY

Materials and Methods

Scale Development. Based on the literature reviews of Yoo et al. [9], Kim [1], and Kim and Hyun [8], seven scale items were developed. Table 1 lists all the scale items used in the survey and their sources. All items were measured using a Likert-type five-point scale, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

Positioning efforts in this study refer to consumers' perceptions of marketing efforts, including price, place, and promotion. Price, measured by two items, reflects subjective customer perceptions [20]. Location, assessed by two items, gauges subjective responses to the restaurant's setting and service quality [8]. Promotion, measured by two items, reflects marketing efforts [8].

Figure 2 illustrates the structural relationships among positioning mix efforts and Brand Equity, as analyzed using Smart PLS. Brand asset elements - perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand awareness or image - are considered. Perceived quality, measured by three items, captures customers' overall perceptions of restaurant quality [1]. Brand loyalty, assessed by three criteria, reflects commitment to a specific restaurant [1].
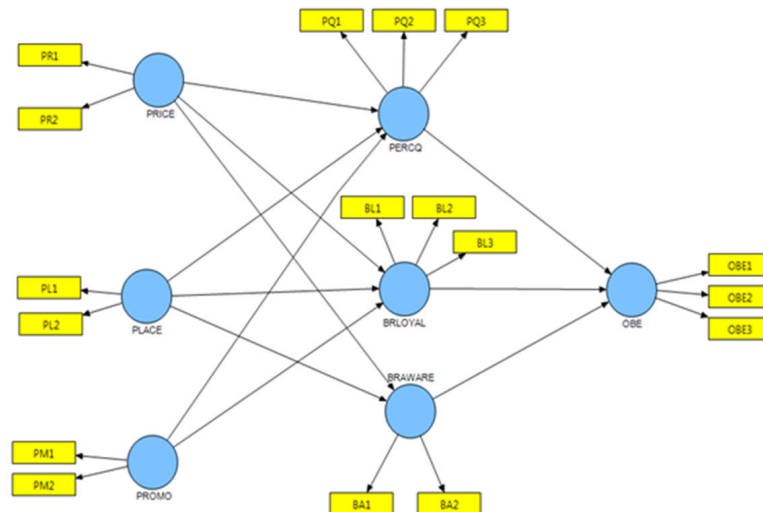

Figure 2 – Structural relationships among positioning mix efforts and Brand Equity
Note – drawn from Smart PLS analysis

Table 1 – Scale items for survey

Scale item	Author
Positioning efforts	
Price scale	
PR1. The prices in this restaurant are reasonable for quality of the product	Kim and Hyun (2011)
PR2. The prices in this restaurant are low	Kim and Hyun (2011)
Place scale:	
PL1. Food is served fast and correct	Kim and Hyun (2011)
PL2. The restaurant has a convenient location	Kim and Hyun (2011)
Promotion scale:	
PM1. The ad campaigns of this restaurant are seen frequently	Kim and Hyun (2011)
PM2. Its web site provides enough information	Kim and Hyun (2011)
Elements of Brand Equity and Overall Brand Equity	
Perceived Quality scale:	
PQ1. The quality of products in this restaurant is credible	Kim and Hyun (2011)
PQ2. Serving ordered food accurately	Kim (2004)
PQ3. Well-trained, experienced personnel	Kim (2004)
Brand Loyalty scale:	
BL1. I regularly visit this restaurant	Kim (2004)
BL2. I usually use this restaurant as my first choice compared to other restaurants	Kim (2004)
BL3. I would recommend this restaurant to others	Kim (2004)
Brand Awareness/Brand Image scale:	

BA1. It has a differentiated image from other restaurant brands	Kim (2004)
BA2. It has a cheerful atmosphere	Kim (2004)
Overall Brand Equity scale:	
OBE1. It makes sense to dine in this restaurant instead of any other, even if they are similar	Yoo et al. (2000)
OBE2. Even if another restaurant has same features as X, I would prefer to have my meal in X	Yoo et al. (2000)
OBE3. If there is another brand as good as X, I prefer to dine in X	Yoo et al. (2000)
Note – drafted by the authors	

To measure Brand Awareness with Brand Image I used two scale-items, both drawn from previous research made by Kim. They are used to evaluate simple brand associations that incorporate brand recognition.

Finally, the Overall Brand Equity is measured by three items. Those items are drawn from Yoo et al. [9]. First, the questionnaire asks respondents to write down the name of the restaurant that comes first to their minds when they want to eat out. Then the rest of the questions are answered around the chosen restaurant.

Questionnaire. To collect data for the research project, a quantitative method survey was conducted. This survey aimed to investigate the impact of positioning on restaurant brand assets in the Almaty dining market. The survey was conducted online using a non-probability convenience sample.

The self-administered questionnaire consisted of 21 questions and began with an introduction to the research purpose. Then, respondents were asked to provide basic demographic information such as their age and gender. Additionally, they were questioned about their dining habits and the name of their favorite restaurant that comes to mind first.

The survey measured the restaurant's positioning efforts, such as pricing, location, and promotional activities, and assessed brand asset dimensions, including perceived quality, brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand image. Respondents' opinions on these dimensions were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale. Finally, an assessment of the overall brand assets of the restaurant was conducted.

This survey was conducted online using Google Forms, and the data collection process lasted for about two weeks. Measures were taken throughout the data collection process to ensure its effective and systematic execution, ensuring the reliability and validity of the collected data.

Sampling and Data collection. To have a credible and sustainable database, a considerable number of people needed to answer the survey questionnaire. That's why the minimum sample size for this study was chosen as 70.

The scope of the study was limited to local residents, tourists, and a mixed ethnic group capable of answering the questionnaire online in the Almaty region. To increase the number of respondents, the questionnaire was distributed to urban student groups on social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram. Approximately 50 respondents answered the questionnaire in the first week, with the remainder responding in the second week. The survey ended on March 7th, with a total of 73 respondents, of which 54.8 % were female and 45.2 % were male. The survey was primarily conducted among university students and their families and friends. The majority (78.1%) of respondents were aged between 18 and 22. Students aged 23 to 27 accounted for 12.3 %, those under 18 accounted for 6.8 %, and those over 31 accounted for only 2.7 %. The frequency of dining out was as follows: 38.4 % of respondents dined out 1-2 times a week; 32.9 % dined out less than once a week; 23.3 % dined out 3-5 times a week; finally, 5.5 % dined out more than 6 times a week.

The survey collected data on respondents' favorite restaurants, finding that Burger King, KFC, Kaganat, Samurai Sushi, Donerci, Paradise, Tarym, Tomato, Shipudim, Asian Barbeque, Gippo, Hardee's, Ozyurt, Dastarkhan Foods, Rumi, and Pinta were the most frequently mentioned restaurants.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The key objective of this research was to identify the relationships between research constructs as they are perceived by customers. The individual brands mentioned in the survey were ignored. Only customers' perceived relationships and attitudes toward constructs were taken into consideration.

Measurement Model. In this study I am using Partial Least Squares approach to Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using Smart PLS because the sample size is small. It is also more convenient for this research because PLS-SEM is usually exploited for marketing, behavioral sciences, business strategy etc. [21].

There are seven latent variables: Price (PRICE), Place (PLACE), Promotion (PROMO), Perceived Quality (PERCQ), Brand Loyalty (BRLOYAL), Brand Awareness and Brand Image (BRAWARE), and Overall Brand Equity (OBE).

 All indicators in this study are reflective – they are interchangeable.

The PLS-SEM output. *Explanation of target endogenous variable variance.* The R^2 of OBE is 0.608. This means that the three latent variables PERCQ, BRLOYAL, and BRAWARE moderately explain 60.8 % of the variance in OBE because R^2 > 0.50 is considered moderate in market research. Figure 3 presents the results of the structural equation modeling and illustrates these relationships.

The R^2 of PERCQ is 0.457, which is close to a moderate coefficient of determination. PRICE, PLACE, and PROMO explain 38.7 % of the variance in BRLOYAL, which is below moderate variance (R^2 > 0.50) but above weak variance (R^2 > 0.25). Lastly, for substantial variance (R^2 > 0.75) in BRAWARE, R^2 is 0.787.

Inner model path coefficient sizes and significance. The internal model indicates that the hypothesized paths between PERCQ and OBE (0.456), BRLOYAL and OBE (0.328), BRAWARE and OBE (0.103) are all statistically significant, as the standardized path coefficients are above p > 0.05.

Hypothesized paths between marketing activities and brand asset elements are as follows: PRICE and PERCQ (0.312), PRICE and BRLOYAL (0.243), PRICE and BRAWARE (0.063), PLACE and PERCQ (0.482), PLACE and BRLOYAL (0.629), PLACE and BRAWARE (0.873) all have statistical significance (p > 0.05). This implies that PRICE and PLACE are moderate predictors of all three brand asset elements (PERCQ, BRLOYAL, BRAWARE).

However, PROMO only has one statistically significant relationship with PERCQ (0.180), while the other two are not statistically significant: PROMO and BRLOYAL (-0.162), PROMO and BRAWARE (-0.010). In other words, PROMO cannot directly predict BRLOYAL and BRAWARE.

Outer model loadings. In this study, the number of iterations is 9. This means that the algorithm converged after only 9 iterations instead of 300, so the estimates are good.
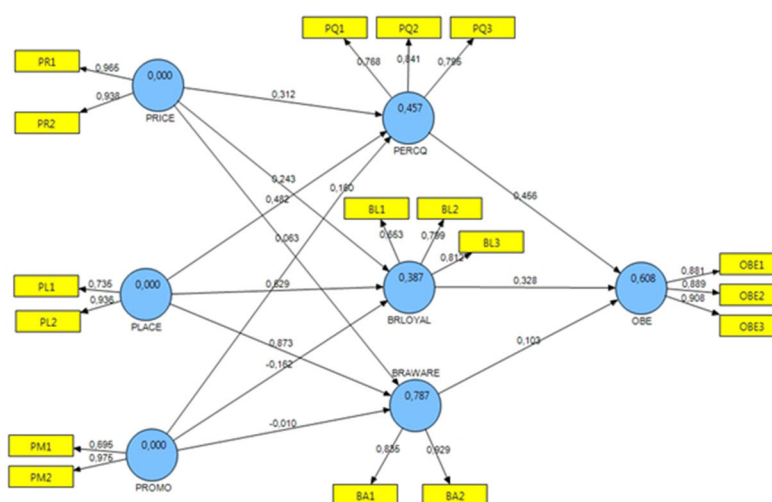

Figure 3 – Results of the structural equation modeling
Note – drawn from Smart PLS analysis

Indicator reliability. To find the indicator reliability, we need to square each of the outer loadings. Table 2 below shows the loadings of all indicators and their squares. All of the indicators in this model are higher than the minimum acceptable level of 0.4, and close to the 0.7, which is the preferred level.

Internal consistency reliability. The fifth column in the table 2 indicates Composite Reliability. It is used as a replacement of Cronbach's alpha. Values should be higher than 0.6 to be reliable. Table 2 shows that all of the values presented are higher than 0.6, therefore all seven variables show high level of internal reliability consistency.

Convergent validity. To check convergent validity, we need to evaluate each variable's Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Convergent validity is confirmed if each latent variable's AVE is higher than 0.5. Table 2 indicates that all values in the last column (AVE) are higher than 0.5.

Table 2 – Results Summary

Latent Variable	Indicators	Loadings	Indicator Reliability	Composite Reliability	AVE
BRAWARE	BA1	0,8349	0,69706	0,8762	0,7802
	BA2	0,9291	0,86323		
BRLOYAL	BL1	0,6529	0,42628	0,8009	0,5751
	BL2	0,7993	0,63888		
	BL3	0,8124	0,65999		
OBE	OBE1	0,8808	0,77581	0,9216	0,7967
	OBE2	0,8888	0,78997		
	OBE3	0,908	0,82446		
PERCQ	PQ1	0,7679	0,58967	0,8438	0,6433
	PQ2	0,8413	0,70779		
	PQ3	0,7954	0,63266		
PLACE	PL1	0,7351	0,54037	0,8274	0,7086
	PL2	0,9364	0,87684		
PRICE	PR1	0,9654	0,932	0,9508	0,9061
	PR2	0,9382	0,88022		
PROMO	PM1	0,6954	0,48358	0,8312	0,7167
	PM2	0,9746	0,94985		
Note – drawn from Smart PLS analysis					

Discriminant validity. To check the discriminant validity, we need to take square roots of AVE of each variable and write them down manually to the table 3. This table is drawn from "Latent Variable Correlation" section of the default report and shows the correlation between latent variables. Square roots of AVE are calculated and written on the diagonal of the table. They need to be higher than other correlation values among the latent variables. The square root of AVE of PERCQ (0.802) is higher than (0.7103, 0.5917, and 0.7239) in the row of PERCQ and (0.6133, 0.3885, and 0.2501) in the column of PERCQ.

Table 3 – Checking Discriminant Validity

	BRAWARE	BRLOYAL	OBE	PERCQ	PLACE	PRICE	PROMO
BRAWARE	**0,8832**						
BRLOYAL	0,5459	**0,7583**					

OBE	0,6066	0,6547	**0,8925**				
PERCQ	0,7103	0,5917	0,7239	**0,802**			
PLACE	0,8498	0,5313	0,5713	0,6133	**0,8417**		
PRICE	0,2762	0,4113	0,3814	0,3885	0,2413	**0,9518**	
PROMO	0,2807	-0,037	0,1523	0,2501	0,3509	-0,2518	**0,8465**
Note – drawn from Smart PLS analysis							

Checking structural path significance. T-statistics in this study were calculated using two-tailed t-test with significance level of 5% by the "Bootstrapping" procedure in Smart PLS (figure 4).
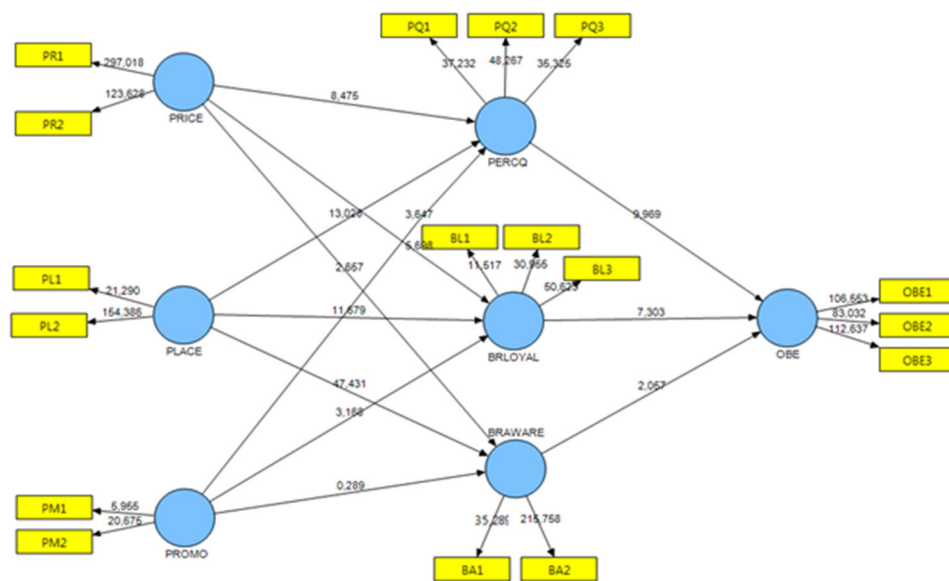

Figure 4 – Results of the Bootstrapping procedure
Note – drawn from Smart PLS analysis

The path coefficient is significant if it is higher than 1.96. The table 4 below shows the values of T-statistics for inner model. All path coefficients in the inner model are significant except for PROMO -> BRAWARE (0.289), which is less than 1.96.

Table 4 – T-statistics of Path Coefficients – Inner model

	T-statistics
BRAWARE -> OBE	2,057
BRLOYAL -> OBE	7,303
PERCQ -> OBE	9,969
PLACE -> BRAWARE	47,431
PLACE -> BRLOYAL	11,679
PLACE -> PERCQ	13,026
PRICE -> BRAWARE	2,657
PRICE -> BRLOYAL	5,698

PRICE -> PERCQ	8,475
PROMO -> BRAWARE	0,289
PROMO -> BRLOYAL	3,168
PROMO -> PERCQ	3,647
Note – Drawn from the Smart PLS report	

T-statistics for outer model are shown in table 5. All values are higher than 1.96, thus outer model loadings are highly significant.

Table 5 – T-statistics of Path Coefficients – Outer model

	T-statistics
BA1 <- BRAWARE	35,289
BA2 <- BRAWARE	215,758
BL1 <- BRLOYAL	11,517
BL2 <- BRLOYAL	30,955
BL3 <- BRLOYAL	50,623
OBE1 <- OBE	106,553
OBE2 <- OBE	83,032
OBE3 <- OBE	112,637
PL1 <- PLACE	21,290
PL2 <- PLACE	154,386
PM1 <- PROMO	5,955
PM2 <- PROMO	20,675
PQ1 <- PERCQ	37,232
PQ2 <- PERCQ	48,267
PQ3 <- PERCQ	35,325
PR1 <- PRICE	297,018
PR2 <- PRICE	123,628
Note – Drawn from the Smart PLS report	

Structural Model. The model consists of three exogenous constructs, which are positioning efforts (PRICE, PLACE, PROMO). The exogenous constructs are related to three endogenous mediating constructs (dimensions of Brand Equity: PERCQ, BRLOYAL, BRAWARE), which are related to the last endogenous construct – overall brand equity (OBE).

Relationships between Positioning activities and Brand Equity elements. H1a, H1b, H1c, H2a, H2b, H2c, H3a are accepted while H3b and H3c are not accepted (Table 6). Price has a positive relationship with Perceived Quality of the restaurant, Brand Loyalty and Brand Awareness with Brand Image. Place also has a positive impact on all three elements of Brand Equity. However, Promotion has a positive relationship only with Perceived Quality. H3b and H3c are not supported, which means that there is no positive relationship between Promotion and Brand Loyalty and between Promotion and Brand Awareness/Brand Image. The t values for the hypothesized paths, except for H3b and H3c, ranged from 2.6 to 48.8, with the weakest supported path (2.6) from price to brand awareness/brand image.

Relationships between Brand Equity elements and Overall Brand Equity. As hypothesized, the relationships of the overall value of brand equity with the three dimensions of brand equity (Perceived Quality, Brand Loyalty, Brand Awareness/Brand Image) are all positive and significant (H4, H5, H6). The relationships of Brand Awareness/Brand Image (0,103; t value=2,05) were much weaker than the relationships of Perceived Quality (0,456; t value=9,969) and Brand Loyalty (0,328; t value=7,303) to Overall Brand Equity.

Table 6 – Results of hypotheses testing

Hypothesized relationships	Standardized loadings	T-statistics	Conclusion (p<0.05)
Relationships between Positioning activities and Brand Equity elements			
H1a: Price -> Perceived Quality	0,312	8,475	Supported
H1b: Price -> Brand Loyalty	0,243	5,698	Supported
H1c: Price -> Brand Awareness/Brand Image	0,063	2,657	Supported
H2a: Place -> Perceived Quality	0,482	13,026	Supported
H2b: Place -> Brand Loyalty	0,180	11,679	Supported
H2c: Place -> Brand Awareness/Brand Image	0,873	47,431	Supported
H3a: Promotion -> Perceived Quality	0,180	3,647	Supported
H3b:Promotion -> Brand Loyalty	-0,162	3,168	Not Supported
H3c: Promotion -> Brand Awareness/Brand Image	-0,010	0,289	Not Supported
Relationships between Brand Equity elements and Overall Brand Equity			
H4: Perceived Quality -> Overall Brand Equity	0,456	9,969	Supported
H5: Brand Loyalty -> Overall Brand Equity	0,328	7,303	Supported
H6: Brand Awareness/Brand Image -> Overall Brand Equity	0,103	2,05	Supported
Note – drafted by the authors			

Managerial implications. The present study delves into the interplay between Positioning efforts, Brand Equity elements, and Brand Equity within the realm of the restaurant industry in Kazakhstan. Employing structural equation modeling, the research scrutinizes the relational dynamics between three Positioning efforts and Overall Brand Equity, with a focus on the mediating role of three Brand Equity dimensions.

The findings indicate that Perceived Quality (0.456) has the most substantial influence on Overall Brand Equity, followed by Brand Loyalty (0.328) and Brand Awareness/Brand Image (0.103), collectively explaining 60.8% of the variance in Overall Brand Equity.

Perceived Quality, largely shaped by Place (0.482), underscores the imperative of an accessible location and efficient service delivery. Enhancing perceived quality necessitates meticulous attention to expedient and accurate food service, alongside optimizing the restaurant's accessibility through strategic location enhancements.

Upon tallying the responses from the survey, Burger King emerged as the top choice with 10 respondents, followed closely by KFC with 9 respondents. Additionally, notable mentions included Kaganat, Samurai Sushi, Tomato, Tarym, Paradise, and Donerci, each garnering 6 to 5 responses. Conversely, establishments such as Shipudim, Asian Barbeque, Rumi, Dastarkhan food, Ozyurt, Pinta, Gippo, and Hardee's were mentioned only once or twice. Notably, the majority of the popular choices are not standalone restaurants but are part of restaurant chains. Specifically, there are 12 Burger King outlets, 17 KFC branches, 24 Kaganat locations, 2 Samurai Sushi establishments, and 4 each of Tomato, Donerci, and Shipudim, among others. This observation underscores the convenience factor associated with restaurants having multiple locations within the city, making them more accessible to a larger segment of the population. Consequently, to bolster Brand Equity, managers should prioritize expanding their restaurant chain's presence with a focus on convenient locations and maintaining high-quality service standards.

Perceived Quality is also influenced by Price (0.312). When restaurant prices align with the perceived quality of the food, the Brand Equity of the establishment tends to be perceived as higher. Price has long been employed as a positioning tool to differentiate products. Previous research by Yoo et al. demonstrates a positive relationship between Price and Brand Equity. Essentially, if consumers perceive a product's price to be low, they may infer that costs have been cut, potentially lowering product quality. Therefore, as advised by Yoo et al., managers should exercise caution against frequent price cuts and a low-price strategy, as such actions could diminish perceived quality and tarnish the brand image [9].

Additionally, findings from this study reveal a positive relationship between promotion (PROMO) and perceived quality (0.180). However, promotion's impact on perceived quality is less significant compared to

PRICE and PLACE. Notably, most of the surveyed restaurants exhibited minimal to no promotional activities, resulting in low ratings for PROMO indicators. These indicators encompass inquiries about the frequency of restaurant advertisements across various platforms and the adequacy of information provided on the restaurant's website. Contrary to expectations, promotion does not positively influence brand loyalty (-0.162) or brand awareness/brand image (-0.010). Although previous research by Yoo et al. underscores the influence of advertising on product awareness, image, and perceived quality, their findings were not specific to the restaurant industry but rather to sectors such as IT software and various product categories like shoes, cameras, and TVs. Given that the surveyed restaurants in Kazakhstan exhibit minimal promotional activities, the perceived impact of promotion on brand loyalty and awareness/image is negligible.

The second major dimension of Overall Brand Equity is Brand Loyalty (0,328). In this study Brand Loyalty is measured by three indicators – whether the respondent visits this restaurant regularly, whether this restaurant is the first choice compared to other restaurants, and whether he or she would recommend this restaurant to their friends and family. It is interesting that findings show that customers are loyal to some restaurants because of their location and the quality and speed of service (0,529). Price (0,243) has a matter only after location. So, if managers want to increase the Overall Brand Equity, they need to attract and retain more loyal customers who live near the restaurant.

In contrast, Brand Awareness with Brand Image (0.103) exerts a lesser influence on Overall Brand Equity compared to Perceived Quality and Brand Loyalty. Indicators of BRAWARE encompass perceptions of the restaurant's distinct image and its ambiance. Once again, Place (0.873) emerges as a pivotal factor in shaping the restaurant's image and its recognition among consumers. While Brand Awareness/Brand Image demonstrates weak sensitivity to prices (0.063) and negative sensitivity to promotion (-0.010), managers seeking to augment Brand Equity through Brand Awareness should focus on optimizing the restaurant's location and fostering a favorable atmosphere within its premises.

Conclusion. This study highlights the importance and role of brand positioning efforts in creating strong brand assets for restaurants in Almaty city.

The research question was, " How Brand Positioning efforts affect Brand Equity?" There were 9 hypotheses regarding whether brand positioning efforts positively influence brand equity elements, and 12 hypotheses regarding whether brand asset elements positively influence overall brand equity. All hypotheses were accepted except two – Promotion does not have a positive influence on Brand Loyalty and Brand Awareness/Brand Image.

Brand Positioning efforts in the face of Price, Place, and Promotion affect Brand Equity through the Brand Equity dimensions – Perceived Quality, Brand Loyalty, Brand Awareness/Brand Image. Findings show that Perceived Quality explains the biggest part of Overall Brand Equity. It is followed by Brand Loyalty; and the least influence is caused by Brand Awareness/Brand Image.

In turn, Perceived quality is affected mostly by location of the restaurant and the speed and accuracy of food service. Price also influences the quality that consumers perceive – if they perceive prices in restaurant to be high, then quality is perceived to be high too. Consequently, if customers perceive that prices in the restaurant are reasonable for the quality of the product, then Overall Brand Equity is strong. Promotion also has an influence on Perceived Quality.

Brand Loyalty is influenced positively by the Price and Place. In other words, customers become loyal to the restaurant, if they find its location convenient and if there is reasonable price-quality equivalent. However, when customers see ad campaigns of the restaurant frequently, they do not become loyal to the restaurant.

Brand Awareness with Brand Image also have positive effect from the Price and Place, however there is no positive effect from Promotion. It means that, customers of particular restaurant became aware of it and have its image in the mind, not because of promotions, but because of restaurants location and ambience, and prices.

Finally, the managerial implications of this study can mainly focus on the following three aspects.

First, place has a significant influence on all of three elements of Brand Equity. It means that if restaurant managers want to enhance Brand Equity, they need to pay a huge attention on their PLACE. As mentioned in the literature review, PLACE element of marketing mix for the restaurant includes such factors as the location

in the city, closeness to the roads, infrastructure, convenient parking, visible and attractive entrance, exterior and interior, ambience (atmosphere), convenience of chairs or sofas, the time needed to prepare a dish, the speed and accuracy of served food, delivery etc. In other words, PLACE includes everything needed for a final product (dish) to get to the customer's mouth. In this study I have chosen two indicators of PLACE – location and the speed and accuracy of served food. Therefore, when positioning a restaurant, managers should emphasize the convenience of the restaurant's location to the people and the fact that food in the restaurant is served fast and correct.

Second, Perceived Quality has strong direct impact on the Brand Equity. Thus, any positioning activity that will enhance the Perceived Quality of the restaurant will reinforce the Overall Brand Equity. It means that managers should position their restaurants as a qualified in all aspects, because Perceived Quality is the perception of a customer that a given restaurant has a superior quality and is differentiated from other brands. Perceived Quality can be increased after long term relations or experiences and preferences of a customer.

Third, positioning by the Price and Place plays a big role in creating value for Brand Equity. Both Price and Place influence all three dimensions of Brand Equity significantly. Therefore, in order to reinforce Overall Brand Equity, managers have to position their restaurants as those with convenient location and prices that are reasonable for the quality of the dishes and service.

Overall, restaurant managers should capitalize on the strengths of all dimensions of Brand Equity.

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ҚАЗАҚСТАНДАҒЫ МЕЙРАМХАНАЛАРДЫҢ БРЕНДТЕРІН ОРНАЛАСТЫРУ ӘДІСТЕРІ

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АҢДАТПА

Зерттеу мақсаты. Бұл зерттеу Таңдалған Брендті Орналастыру Әрекеттері (Баға, Орын және Жылжыту) мен Бренд Капиталын құру арасындағы байланысты зерттейтін кешенді модельді әзірлеуге бағытталған. Атап айтқанда, зерттеу тәуелсіз және тәуелді айнымалылар арасындағы байланысты орнатудағы Бренд Капиталының үш өлшемінің, соның ішінде Қабылданатын Сапаның, Брендке Адалдықтың және Бренд Туралы Хабардарлықтың/Имиджтің делдалдық рөлін зерттеуге бағытталған.

Әдіснамасы. Зерттеу Қазақстанның Алматы қаласындағы мейрамханалар нарығы үшін жүргізілді, онда онлайн сауалнамалардан деректер жиналды. Сауалнамаға жақын уақытта қаладағы мейрамханаға барған тұтынушылар қатысты. Айнымалылар арасындағы оң байланысты болжайтын 12 гипотезаны тексеру үшін құрылымдық теңдеу моделі қолданылды.

Зерттеудің бірегейлігі / құндылығы. Зерттеу мейрамхана индустриясында жұмыс істейтін маркетологтар үшін, сондай-ақ Брендті Орналастыру Бойынша тиімді әрекеттерді дамытуға ұмтылатын басқа салалардағы маркетологтар үшін құнды ақпарат береді. Брендтің Меншікті Капиталына ықпал ететін факторларды түсіну арқылы маркетологтар өз брендін тұтынушылардың санасында тиімді орналастыратын стратегияларды әзірлеп, жүзеге асыра алады.

Зерттеу нәтижелері. Нәтижелер Орын мен Баға Қазақстандық мейрамханалар нарығында Бренд Капиталын құру процесінің маңызды факторлары болып табылатынын, ал Жылжыту оған айтарлықтай әсер етпейтінін көрсетті. Атап айтқанда, Орын Қабылданған Сапаға, Брендтің Адалдығына және Бренд Туралы Хабардарлыққа, одан кейін Бағаға ең күшті оң әсер ететіні анықталды. Бұл нәтижелер Алматыдағы мейрамханалар Брендтің күшті Капиталын құру үшін физикалық орналасуы мен баға стратегияларын әзірлеуге назар аударуы керек екенін көрсетеді.

Түйін сөздер: Бренд Капиталы, Брендті Орналастыру Әрекеттері, Орны, Бағасы, Жылжыту.

МЕТОДЫ ПОЗИЦИОНИРОВАНИЯ БРЕНДОВ РЕСТОРАНОВ В КАЗАХСТАНЕ

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АННОТАЦИЯ

Цель исследования. Данное исследование было направлено на разработку комплексной модели, изучающей взаимосвязь между отдельными усилиями по позиционированию бренда (цена, место и продвижение) и созданием капитала бренда. В частности, исследование было направлено на изучение посреднической роли трех измерений Капитал бренда, включая Воспринимаемое качество, Лояльность к бренду и Осведомленность/Имидж бренда, в установлении связи между независимыми и зависимыми переменными.

Методология. Исследование проводилось в контексте ресторанного рынка Алматы, Казахстан, где данные были собраны с помощью онлайн-опросников. Выборка состояла из клиентов, недавно посетивших один из ресторанов города. Для проверки двенадцати гипотез была использована модель структурных уравнений, которая предполагала положительную связь между переменными.

Оригинальность / ценность исследования. Данное исследование предоставляет ценную информацию для маркетологов, работающих в ресторанном бизнесе, а также для маркетологов других отраслей, которые стремятся разработать эффективные усилия по позиционированию бренда. Понимая факторы, которые способствуют укреплению капитала бренда, маркетологи могут разрабатывать и реализовывать стратегии, которые эффективно позиционируют их бренд в сознании потребителей.

Результаты исследования. Результаты показали, что Место и Цена являются критическими факторами в процессе формирования Капитал бренда на казахстанском ресторанном рынке, в то время как Продвижение не оказывает на него значительного влияния. В частности, было установлено, что место оказывает наиболее сильное положительное влияние на воспринимаемое качество, лояльность к бренду и осведомленность/имидж бренда, за которым следует цена. Полученные результаты свидетельствуют о том, что рестораны Алматы должны сосредоточиться на развитии своих физических мест и ценовых стратегий для создания сильного Капитала бренда.

Ключевые слова: Капитал бренда, Усилия по позиционированию бренда, Место, Цена, Продвижение.

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