

Factors of Restaurant Brand Equity and Their Impact on Brand Reputation

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Abstract

The aim of this research paper is to investigate the relationship of restaurant brand equity with brand reputation, there were five factors of restaurant brand equity i.e food & service quality, brand affect, self-congruence, brand awareness and brand association the study was carried out at SUBWAY restaurant of Lahore, Pakistan. The independent variables of the study were food & service quality, brand affect, self-congruence, brand awareness and brand association while dependent variable was brand reputation. Total 384 questionnaires were distributed among the people who dine at SUBWAY restaurant and 274 questionnaires were completed in all respects, demonstrating the response rate of 71.3%. For data analysis, various statistical tools have been used such as SPSS for descriptive statistics and AMOS for hypotheses testing. The results of the study demonstrated that food & service quality, brand affect, self-congruence, brand awareness and brand association have significantly positive relationship with brand reputation in restaurant sector. This study will assist marketers and policy makers to better understand restaurant brand equity in order to craft better strategies as a tool to make a brand more, reputable.

Keywords: Food & service quality, brand affect, self-congruence, brand awareness, brand association, brand reputation, SUBWAY restaurant.

Introduction:

Changes in shopper ways of life have prompted an expansion in the interest for changed eating encounters and to the quick development in the fast food service industry (Min and Min, 2011). This improvement has an affected the presence of numerous chain eateries which much of the time construct solid brands with a specific end goal to fortify competitiveness and brand equity with the goal that customers are capable to perceive the chain eatery mark better (Kim and Kim, 2005). Perkins (2014) states that independent eateries battle since shoppers are changing to chain eateries.

Albeit a few researchers have contemplated the advancement of the chain eatery showcase, a set number of studies center on consumer based brand equity in the chain eatery industry (Hyun and Kim, 2011; Kim and Kim, 2005). Although research conducted by Han, S. H., Nguyen, B., & Lee, T. J. (2015) found the relationship of food and service quality, brand effect, self-congruence, brand awareness and brand association with brand reputation and tested a consumer-based chain restaurant brand equity (CBCRBE) model but in literature there is a lack of research regarding relationship of all these factors. So this research study attempts to fill this gap as it examine the relationship between CBCRBE and brand reputation in Gourmet restaurant of Lahore, Pakistan.

The objectives of this research study were to find out the brand equity of SUBWAY restaurant of Lahore, Pakistan.

This research study will answer the following question. Is there any relationship between food and service quality, brand effect, self-congruence, brand awareness, brand association and brand reputation? To find out the answer of this question, data was gathered through questionnaire from the people who dine at SUBWAY restaurant.

Section 2 describe literature review and hypotheses development, section 3 describe the methodology of the study, section 4 demonstrate the results while section 5 indicate the discussion about results.

Literature Review:

Relationship among food & service quality and brand reputation:

Analysts recommend that service quality is related with brand reputation, that is, service quality turns into a device that can show a decent or awful reputation (Wirtz et al., 2000). Having a decent reputation guarantees development in ubiquity through word of mouth (Walsh et al., 2009). Interestingly, uncertain item quality may have a negative impact on building a brand reputation (Selnes, 1993). Jin and Leslie (2009) bolster this relationship by demonstrating that chain eateries have preferred nourishment cleanliness quality over autonomous eateries due to the reputational motivating forces of the chain. Research conducted by Han, S. H., Nguyen, B., & Lee, T. J. (2015) found the positive effect of food & service quality on brand reputation in restaurant sector. In light of the above contentions, this research work guesses that:

H1: Relationship among food & service quality and brand reputation is significantly positive.

Relationship among brand affect and brand reputation:

Passionate emotions, for example, cherish, loathe, pity and outrage give the vitality that animates and maintains a specific state of mind towards a brand (Wright, 2006). Research demonstrated that utilization is represented by purchasers' sentiments and feelings, notwithstanding the practical part of the item (Zohra, 2011). Thus, analysts coordinate much consideration towards the emotional factors in marketing (Keller, 2008).

Research showed that Yu and Dean (2001) suggest that the emotional component of customer fulfillment is a superior part to predict positive word of- mouth than subjective components (e.g. cost and quality). Ladhari (2009) found that enthusiastic fulfillment positively affects behavioral aims, for example, faithfulness and suggestion in hospitality industry. Along these lines, satisfying shoppers and securing their inclinations will frame a positive brand reputation. Research directed by Han, S. H., Nguyen, B., & Lee, T. J. (2015) found the positive effect of brand affect on brand reputation in restaurant industry. In light of these contentions, the present research work guesses that:

H2: Relationship among brand affect and brand reputation is significantly positive.

Relationship among self-congruence and brand reputation:

Researchers hold that buyers have a tendency to incline toward brands with pictures that match their own particular self-idea, and self-congruence is alluded to as this procedure of coordinating (Sirgy and Su, 2000). Self-congruence is identified with emblematic utilization, which communicates the self-idea through utilization (Hosany and Martin, 2012). Researchers utilize the self-idea to clarify shopper conduct (Quester et al., 2000) on the grounds that a man's particular conduct designs are every now and again dictated by the picture that he/she has about himself/herself (Onkvisit and Shaw, 1989). This, thus, recommends self-congruence makes positive brand states of mind (Ekinici and Riley, 2003) and impacts brand inclination (Jamal and Goode, 2001). In an aggressive promoting condition, the degree of the congruence between buyers' self-idea and a brand's picture fundamentally impacts buyers' assessment of the brand (Graeff, 1996). The research work of Han, S. H., Nguyen, B., & Lee, T. J. (2015) found the positive effect of self-congruence on brand reputation in restaurant sector. At the point when reputation is considered as the general assessment of a brand, the present investigation proposes that:

H3: Relationship among self-congruence and brand reputation is significantly positive.

Relationship among brand awareness and brand reputation:

Brand awareness is a vital objective of showcasing endeavors in light of the fact that brand image and brand attitude can't be shaped in its nonappearance (Macdonald and Sharp, 2003). Scholars have exhibited that brand awareness is identified with brand reputation (Maltz, 1991). Brand awareness and brand association are thought to be the principle segments of reputation (Davies and Miles, 1998), and interests in brand awareness can lead to manageable upper hand and long haul brand value (Macdonald and Sharp, 2003). According to the work of Han, S. H., Nguyen, B., & Lee, T. J. (2015), the effect of brand awareness on brand reputation is positive. In this manner, the present research work places the brand awareness relationship with brand reputation and the think about speculates that:

H4: Relationship among brand awareness and brand reputation is significantly positive.

Relationship among brand association and brand reputation:

Brand associations are viewed as a standout amongst the most critical factors in making a brand image (Keller, 2008; Ross et al., 2006). Romaniuk and Nenycz-Thiel (2013) take note of that a solid memory impact fortifies a brand image. Customers who are faithful to a brand regularly relate an organization with a positive reputation (Roberts and Dowling, 2002). Research work of Han, S. H., Nguyen, B., & Lee, T. J. (2015) demonstrated the positive effect of brand association on brand reputation in restaurant industry. Therefore, the present investigation estimates that:

H5: Relationship among brand association and brand reputation is significantly positive.

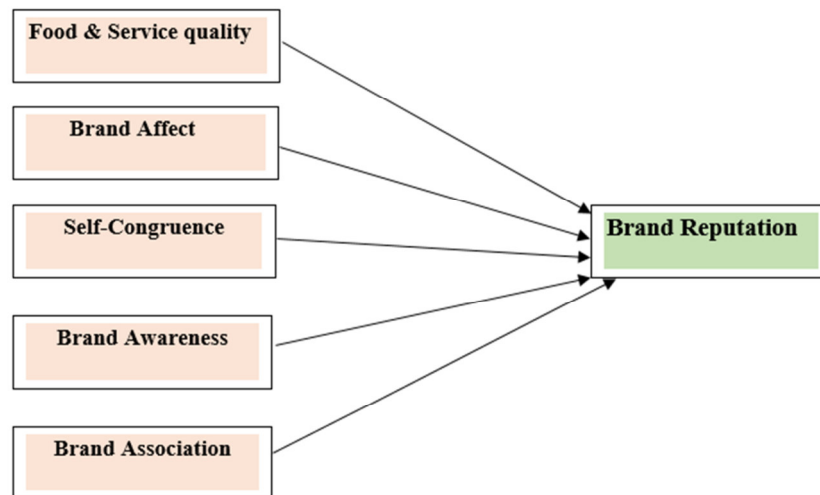


Figure1: Proposed Research Model

Methodology:

Sampling and data collection

To determine the causal relationship of food & service quality, brand affect, self-congruence, brand awareness and brand association with brand reputation in restaurant sector of Pakistan, a quantitative research was done at SUBWAY restaurant. According to the recommendation of Krejcie and Morgan, (1970) table to determine sample size, we have used sample of 384 people who dine in SUBWAY restaurant. To collect data from respondents, cross sectional survey strategy was implemented with the help of questionnaire through convenience sampling method.

Questionnaire

Food & service quality was measured by adopting two food quality, two physical quality, and two staff behavior items from Dutta et al. (2007), Soriano (2002) and Ekinci (2001). To measure brand effect, three items proposed by Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) were used. Self-congruence was measured by adopting three items from Sirgy and Su (2000). Brand awareness and brand association were measured by adopting three items from Yoo et al. (2000) and Netemeyer et al. (2004), and three items from Gladden and Funk (2002). To measure brand reputation, three items developed by Veloutsou and Moutinho (2009) were used.

A five point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree was employed on each item of the constructs.

Results and Analysis:

Total 384 questionnaires were distributed among the people who dine at SUBWAY restaurant and 274 questionnaires were completed in all respects, demonstrating the response rate of 71.3%. To examine the demographic characteristics of the respondents, SPSS 23 was used.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of Respondents:

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1-Gender:		
Male	148	54.1
Female	126	45.9
2-Age:		
16-25	77	28.1
26-35	98	35.8
36-45	53	19.3
Above 45	46	16.8

Gender variable indicates that among 274, the frequency of male category is 148 with the percentage of 54.1 and frequency of female category is 126 with the percentage of 45.9. Age variable is divided into four portions. Age limit of 26-35 indicates the highest frequency of 98 with the percentage of 35.8, age limit of 16-25 indicates the second highest frequency of 77 with 28.1 %, 36-45 indicates the frequency of 53 with 19.3% and lowest frequency is of above 45 age limit with the percentage of 16.8.

To measure descriptive statistics of the study, SPSS 23 was used.

Table 2. Measurement scales and indicators of constructs' Items:

Constructs	Indicators	Mean	SD
Food & Service Quality Dutta et al. (2007), Soriano (2002) and Ekinici (2001).	FSQ1-The staff of this restaurant brand is helpful and friendly	4.17	1.033
	FSQ2-This restaurant brand offers a tidy environment	4.21	1.106
	FSQ3-This restaurant brand provides comfortable seats and tables	4.12	1.067
	FSQ4-The staff of this restaurant brand is talented and displays a natural expertise	4.18	1.191
	FSQ5-This restaurant brand offers fresh foods	4.27	0.994
	FSQ6-This restaurant brand prepares food and drinks according to hygiene standard	4.27	1.021
Brand Affect Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001)	BA1-I feel good when I dine in this restaurant brand	3.94	1.137
	BA2-This restaurant brand makes me happy	3.93	1.239
	BA3-This restaurant brand gives me pleasure	4.07	1.117
Self-Congruence Sirgy and Su (2000)	SC1-The customers who dine in this restaurant are very much like me	4.05	1.405
	SC2-The customers who dine in this restaurant reflect the type of person I would like to be	4.06	1.458
	SC3-The customers who dine in this restaurant are very much like the person I admire	3.99	1.370
Brand Awareness Yoo et al. (2000) and Netemeyer et al. (2004)	BAW1-I am aware of this brand	4.46	0.943
	BAW2-I am familiar with this restaurant brand	4.16	1.006
	BAW3-I can recognize this brand among other restaurant brands	4.21	1.085
Brand Association Gladden and Funk (2002)	BAS1-This brand has an attractive logo	4.23	1.204
	BAS2-I like the logo of the brand	4.41	1.124
	BAS3-I like the colours of building or interior	4.45	1.022
Brand Reputation Veloutsou and Moutinho (2009)	BREP1-This brand is trustworthy	4.28	1.103
	BREP2-This brand is reputable	4.34	1.143
	BREP3-This brand makes honest claims	4.17	1.242

Measurement Model:

The measurement model of the study is demonstrated in figure 2.

To measure the reliability of measurement scale, both cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were employed. According to Hair *et al.* (2010), the values of cronbach's alpha and composite reliability more than 0.70 are bearable, whilst the values less than 0.07 directed the lack of internal consistency. Table 3 demonstrated the values of cronbach's alpha and composite reliability and all values were greater than 0.07.

To verify the convergent validity, both standardized loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were employed. Table 3 indicated that measurement items' standardized loadings greater than recommended lower limit of 0.06 with no cross loadings (Hair *et al.*,2010). Regarding AVE, the values of all constructs exceeded the suggested lower limit of 0.05 as set by Fornell and Larcker (1981).

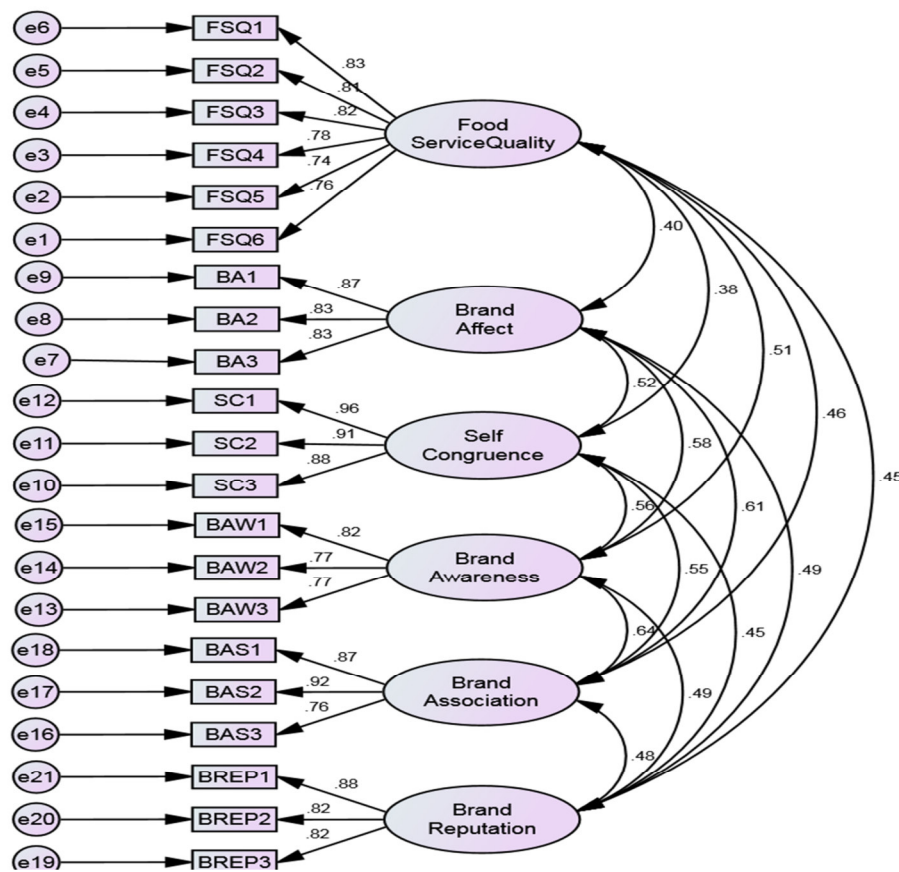


Figure 2: Measurement Model

Table 3: Reliability and Convergent Validity:

Constructs	Items	Reliability		Convergent Validity	
		Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Composite Reliability	Standardized Loadings	Average Variance Extracted
Food & Service quality	FSQ1	0.908	0.909	.833	0.626
	FSQ2			.815	
	FSQ3			.820	
	FSQ4			.777	
	FSQ5			.741	
	FSQ6			.755	
Brand Affect	BA1	0.879	0.881	.870	0.712
	BA2			.827	
	BA3			.834	
Self-Congruence	SC1	0.940	0.941	.959	0.841
	SC2			.910	
	SC3			.880	
Brand Awareness	BAW1	0.830	0.831	.823	0.621
	BAW2			.774	
	BAW3			.766	
Brand Association	BAS1	0.885	0.890	.873	0.731
	BAS2			.920	
	BAS3			.764	
Brand Reputation	BREP1	0.877	0.880	.879	0.711
	BREP2			.825	
	BREP3			.824	

To test discriminant validity, the comparison of shared variances among factors and square root of AVE was done. Table 4 demonstrated that all shared variances among factors were lower than the square root of AVE

of individual factor, it confirmed that discriminant validity was satisfactory and constructs were different from each other.

Table 4: Correlations of Latent Variables and Square Root of AVE:

Variables	Food Service Quality	Brand Affect	Self-Congruence	Brand Awareness	Brand Association	Brand Reputation
Food & Service Quality	0.791					
Brand Affect	0.404	0.844				
Self-Congruence	0.376	0.523	0.917			
Brand Awareness	0.508	0.583	0.560	0.788		
Brand Association	0.460	0.614	0.554	0.640	0.855	
Brand Reputation	0.451	0.486	0.445	0.487	0.484	0.843

Structural Model:

The structural model of study is demonstrated in figure 3.

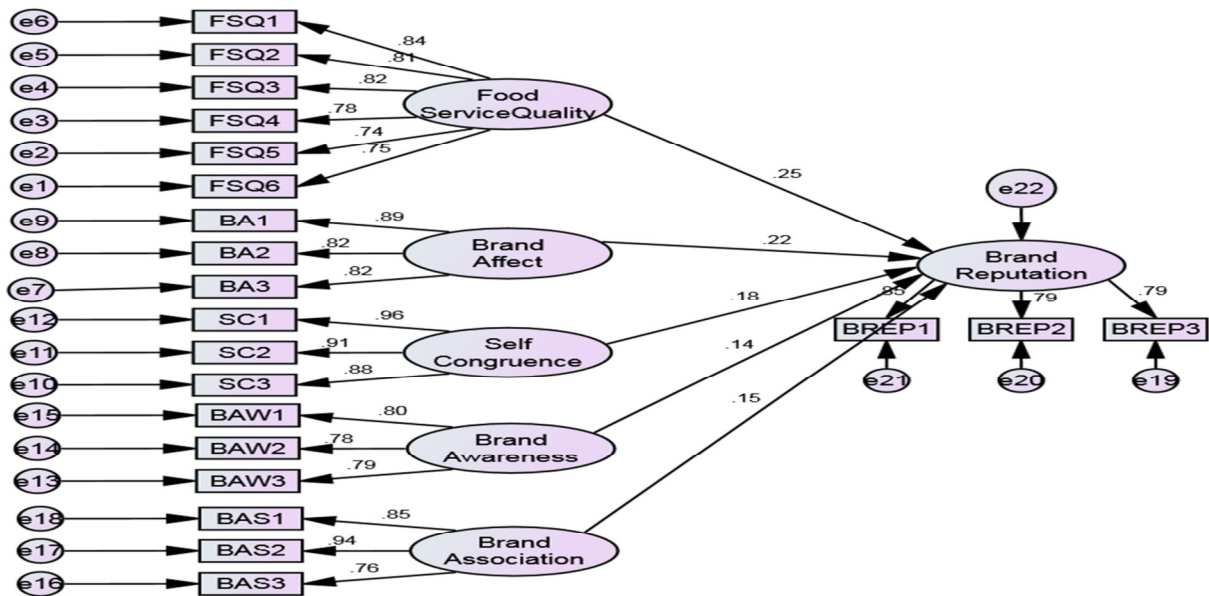


Figure 3: Structural Model

Table 5: Results:

Hypotheses	Hypothesized Path	Standardized Path Coefficients	p-value	Results
H1	Food & Service Quality → Brand Reputation	0.249	***	Supported
H2	Brand Affect → Brand Reputation	0.216	***	Supported
H3	Self-Congruence → Brand Reputation	0.179	0.003	Supported
H4	Brand Awareness → Brand Reputation	0.137	0.034	Supported
H5	Brand Association → Brand Reputation	0.153	0.013	Supported

Note: p < 0.05; *** p < 0.001

Using Amos 23, structural model's fitness and testing of hypotheses were done. This study is significant at confidence level of 95%. The ranges of fit index of structural model were acceptable. Values of standardized path coefficient of each significant causal relationship are shown in figure 3.

Results demonstrated that all five hypotheses were supported (Table 5). Food & service quality ($\beta=0.249$, $p=***$), brand effect ($\beta=0.216$, $p=***$), self-congruence ($\beta=0.179$, $p=0.003$), brand awareness ($\beta=0.137$, $p=0.034$) and brand association ($\beta=0.153$, $p=0.013$) were found to have significant and positive effect on brand reputation.

Discussion

The purpose of this research study was to find out the impact of food & service quality, brand effect, self-congruence, brand awareness and brand association on brand reputation in SUBWAY restaurant of Pakistan. Food & service quality, brand effect, self-congruence, brand awareness and brand association were exogenous variables while brand reputation was endogenous variable of the study. Table 5 demonstrated the relationship of food & service quality with brand reputation in the form of standardized path coefficient and p-value and results supported H1 as standardized path coefficient's value is 0.249 while p-value is highly significant. H2 is also supported as it indicated the relation among brand effect and brand reputation with the standardized path coefficient of 0.216 and highly significant p-value. The relationship between self-congruence and brand reputation also supported H3 as the value of standardized path coefficient is 0.179 while p-value is 0.003. The relation of brand awareness and brand reputation in the form of 0.137 standardized path coefficient and 0.034 p-value demonstrated that H4 is supported. H5 is also supported as brand association's relationship with brand reputation indicated standardized path coefficient of 0.153 and p-value of 0.013. The findings of this study are consistent with the work of Han, S. H., Nguyen, B., & Lee, T. J. (2015) who tested consumer-based chain restaurant brand equity (CBCRBE) model. The difference is that in this model all dimensions of brand equity have positive effect on brand reputation and self-congruence has negative effect on brand reputation but in our study all dimensions of brand equity have positive relationship with brand reputation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study throw light on many important points and recommended vital suggestions to the managers. First of all this research focuses on the improvement of the model of brand equity, suitable for chain restaurant brands, and concentrates on its dimensions namely food & service quality, brand effect, self-congruence, brand awareness and brand association. One of the vital contribution of this research work is that it examined the relation of food & service quality with brand reputation in SUBWAY restaurant sector and found it positive. Managers should pay attention on the fact that restaurant brand's staff should be useful, agreeable and skilled along with this the restaurant brand should offer a clear situation, give agreeable seats and tables, offer crisp sustenance and get ready sustenance and beverages as per cleanliness standard. By paying attention on all these focal points, managers can make the brand reliable and well thought of.

Another vital contribution of this research work is that it scrutinized the brand effect's relationship with brand reputation and found it significantly positive. Managers should focus on all those activities of restaurant brands through which customers make glad and they feel delight. By focusing on these vital points, managers can make the brand dependable and highly regarded. To peruse the relationship among self-congruence and brand reputation is another contribution of this research work. Managers should develop the strategy through which they can attract more admirable customers at the restaurant. Relationship among self-congruence and brand reputation provides a pathway to managers in selecting an appropriate strategy. To scrutinize the brand awareness's relationship with brand reputation is one of the vital contribution of this study. Managers should develop restaurant brand in the manner through which customers can know about the brand as well as perceive the brand among other eatery brands. This research study highlighted the relation among brand association and brand reputation and made important contribution in literature. Staff of restaurant brand should design the logo in an attractive way and the colors of interior should also be attractive. It provides vital recommendation to managers that they should focus on the logo and interior of the brand. By focusing on these important facts, managers can make brand honest and well respected.

It is suggested to managers and policy makers that they should focus on food & service quality, brand effect, self-congruence, brand awareness and brand association to make SUBWAY restaurant of Pakistan, reputable. By paying more attention on all vital points, SUBWAY restaurant can achieve a strong competitive position in restaurant industry.

Limitations and future directions for Research:

There are a few limitations and future research directions of this research study. This research study focused only on SUBWAY restaurant. In future, researchers can implement this model in other restaurants such as Options and Monal etc. In future, researchers can find out the relationship of brand reputation with other variables such as brand trust. This study had led in Lahore. In future, researchers can conduct research in different cities of Pakistan and also at international level. This research study is cross sectional but in future, researchers can acquire time series data. In this research study, data has been collected through questionnaire but in future, data can be collected through other means such as interview etc.

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