

Causal model development of customer-based brand equity of online food delivery agency business in Thailand

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Abstract

The objectives of this research were to develop a causal model of Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE). For the food delivery service agent business in Thailand, this research is survey research. The research methodology used combination of qualitative methodology and quantitative methodology. The quantitative sample was 440 Thai customers who have experience using agent services and making food reservations online by themselves, and the qualitative sample consisted of 5 groups. The data were collected by questionnaires and group discussion and analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation coefficient analysis, confirmative factor analysis, and structural equation model analysis. The results of the research were as follows:

The marketing mix affects the brand value from the customer's point of view with the total influence of 0.29, direct influence of 0.29, and no indirect influence. The marketing mix affects customer satisfaction with the total influence of 0.32, direct influence of 0.17, and indirect influence of 0.16. The organization's transparency in the view of the customer affects the brand value from the customer's point of view with the total influence of 0.39, direct influence of 0.39, and no indirect influence. It also affected the organization's customer satisfaction with the total influence of 0.34, direct influence of 0.13, and indirect influence of 0.21. The service quality affects the brand value from the customer's point of view with the total influence of 0.29, direct influence of 0.29, and no indirect influence. It also affects customer satisfaction with the total influence of 0.42, direct influence of 0.27, and indirect influence of 0.16. The brand value from the customer point of view affects the satisfaction of the organization on the customer side with the total influence of 0.53, direct influence of 0.53, and no indirect influence. The qualitative results showed that marketing mix had an effect on customer-based brand equity. The results of the development of a causal model of Customer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) for online food delivery in Thailand can be concluded that the structural equation model is appropriate with the empirical data.

Keywords: food delivery, customer-based brand equity, consumer satisfaction

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1. Introduction

According to Bangkok Bank SME [5], it was found that consumer behaviors have been changed. Ordering food on applications can respond to and directly access consumers, making fast food delivery services mushrooming today, considered a rising star business at the moment. This business generates income for application operators while restaurants can increase their sales by greater than 80%. It generates a career for groups of drivers, and bike riders for having a full-time or part-time job with a monthly income no lower than 15,000 - 20,000 baht depending on how hard working they are. Today, 5 food delivery applications [25], [47] that gain popularity and win consumers' hearts in urban areas are Foodpanda, GrabFood, LINE MAN, HappyFresh, and GoBike. Each application launches its campaign differently each day, or each week, to attract consumers to use its services. Foodpanda is regarded as the first player in online food delivery in Thailand. After that, there are a lot of competitors mushrooming to seize the market share such as GrabFood affiliated to Grab, a Singapore-based technology company that operates taxi and private hire car services to nearby commuters through a location sharing system on the Grab application. Grab

expands its businesses to 4 countries, i.e., Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Thailand. GrabFood opened its services in Thailand in 2018. Currently, it carries a restaurant database in Bangkok with over 4,000 restaurants. LINE MAN is originated under the management of LINE Thailand team. It is not the services from its parent company. Its services are truly created by Thai people for serving Thai people. LINE MAN opened its services in 2018. Now, it carries a database of restaurants in Thailand under its business partner, Wongnai, with over 400,000 restaurants but more than 1,000 restaurants use its services via the application. HappyFresh is a giant company that provides an online supermarket platform in Indonesia. It has 3 branches in ASEAN, namely, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. It opened its services in 2016 and today there are more than 300,000 products available. Similarly, GoBike is a Thai nationality company providing food and parcel delivery services. It officially opened the services in 2016.

Sethuraman [45] found SERVQUAL is an instrument used to measure service quality comprising reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, and tangibles. Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry revealed service quality gaps. Each gap shows customer expectations, management's perceptions, service quality specifications, service delivery, and customer perceived service

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quality. SERVQUAL is adopted as a technique to measure the service quality of organizations for conducting a study in a service industry and making an understanding of the way target customers perceive services they demand. If service users are very satisfied with services, behaviors in using service repeatedly and continuously shall occur. Businesses give importance to building brand value so as to differentiate the brand in each group of service industries for achieving competitive advantage and business performance. According to a study conducted by Aaker [1, 2], customer-based brand equity means overall characteristics of products and services that can win consumer hearts. Products and services are components for creating customer value that increases customer satisfaction, as well as stakeholder and customer loyalty to reputation of service industries. Therefore, brand equity is important for building brand image and reputation of service industries, and connecting buyers and sellers through customers' perceived experience with outstanding characters and quality diversity. Brands with specific characteristics affect awareness and loyalty to the image of service business, giving rise to business performance and competitive advantage.

Based on the earlier mentioned reasons, the researcher is interested in studying applications which information influences decision making on using online food ordering services among consumers in Bangkok, comprising Foodpanda, GrabFood, LINE MAN, HappyFresh and GoBike. The study results will be used as a guideline and applied to food delivery services in an efficient manner.

2. Objectives

1. To study causal factors and effects of customer-based brand equity for online food delivery agency business (food delivery) in Thailand.
2. To study components in causal factors and effects of customer-based brand equity for online food delivery agency business (food delivery) in Thailand.
3. To develop a causal model of customer-based brand equity for online food delivery agency business (food delivery) in Thailand.

3. Relevant Documents and Research Studies

Concepts and theories related to customer-based brand equity

Customer-based brand equity [1] is a valuable asset that connects brand names to brand logos, adding more value to products or services to organizations and customers. Organizations can build customer value by measuring 4 components of customer-based brand equity as follow:

1. Brand awareness [2], [26] or brand image is brand logos associated with memories and feelings of consumers that connect to company image and reputation, comprising qualifications, benefits or experiences of users, manufacturers, and brand image. It creates connection between consumers and brands and stakeholders.
2. Brand association is building relationship with brands through good feelings, brand perception, and brand image, and

transmitting experiences by telling characteristics of brands and organizations. In addition, brand engagement is an important thing in encouraging customers to have brand awareness and building long-term competitive advantage [32].

3. Perceived quality is derived through customers' good experiences with brands from perceived product quality, a key to make brands outstanding, including brand recall and recognition, and long-term memories engraved in customers' heart [2].

4. Brand loyalty refers to loyalty to brands, caused by logos or brands being the key to brand recall and brand recognition, leading to long-term repeat purchases. Brand loyalty is established by evaluating the value of brands which affects sales or profit in business [2]

Concepts and theories related to marketing mix

The marketing mix for services consists of more elements added to the traditional 4Ps. Emphasis is placed on people, process, and physical evidence. Thus, there are 7 elements in the service marketing mix in response to the maximum satisfaction of target customers in service business. The 5th element is people, covering 2 points as employee's roles in service business such as building relationship with customers, relationship among customers, namely, word of mouth communication among customers about employee service quality. The 6th element is process which refers to the process for delivering services by service providers who are attentive and take care of customers efficiently. The 7th element is physical evidence. It refers to creating environment and atmosphere in shops by using light, sound, and colors including physical characteristics to build customer value.

4. Analysis of goodness of fit index of the model.

Concepts and theories related to organizational transparency in view of customers

Organizations' transparency and social responsibility have an effect on long-term relationship of reliability between customers and food business brands, and gave a suggestion for future research that such relationship should be studied in other industries and there might be variables affecting relationship between transparency and confidence in brands since consumers give more importance to transparency and social responsibility [7], [15]. Pai *et al.* [43] gave a suggestion for future research that a study should be conducted on the decomposition of transparency and corporate social responsibility affecting value and support in brands. There are considerable research studies on transparency and social responsibility affecting brand value in the context of service business, consistent with a research study conducted by Hur, Kim, & Woo [19] finding that transparency and social responsibility have an impact on brand reliability and organizational reputation in South Korea. They [19] gave a suggestion for future research that specific components of transparency such as efficiency, laws, ethics, and donation affecting brand value in other countries should be separated.

Concepts and theories related to service quality

Service quality is mentioned in service business. Most research studies in business context focus on studying service quality of service providers since quality services have a positive influence on levels of customer satisfaction and customer

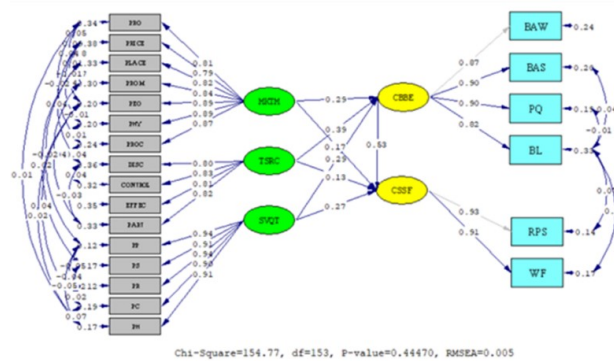


Figure 1: Research Conceptual Framework.

loyalty. Importantly, quality services are significant factors creating competitive advantage to businesses. As a result, research studies most likely evaluate levels of customer perceived service quality by applying measuring instruments such as SERVQUAL developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry [45] and SERVPERF of Cronin, & Taylor [11]. The concept about “quality” was developed from the manufacturing sector in 1950s. Quality was defined and developed to become a concept. Many researchers defined quality as a state of being free from defects. A Japanese philosopher said that quality is no defects and to do things right the first time [44].

A study conducted by Johnson, Lervik, & Wa [22] found customer expectation occurs from receiving nice and quality services, affecting customer satisfaction towards the early stage of services and customers change their attitudes and enjoy long-term services. Based on efficiency of service quality, services rendered consistent with service users' expectation, customers' impression occurs from quality services rendered. Comparison is made between customer perceived services and customer expectation of services.

Concepts and theories related to customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction results from customer demands and expectations towards quality and services. It is the way customers feel good about products and services as they receive benefits of products or services more than they expected, contributing to repeat purchase in the future. Customer satisfaction is associated with customer behaviors and perceived benefits in the long run towards quality products and services [41]. In terms of marketing, satisfaction is defined as the “psychological reaction of customers about their previous experiences and a comparison between operational performance expected and perception that occurs.” The study found that the quality of electronic services had a positive influence on customer satisfaction.

Therefore, satisfaction gives rise to repeat purchase [42]. On the contrary, if customers are not satisfied with products or services, word of mouth occurs to let other people know about bad experiences they received [3], having an impact on organizational reputation eventually. Thus, it is essential that organizations need to retain customer satisfaction.

5. Method to Conduct the Study

This is a mixed-method survey research study using qualitative research and quantitative research designs, details are

explained as follow:

An in-depth interview was used in the qualitative study. Target population and sample were determined. The 5 key informants were selected based on their position in the business and their experience related to the online food delivery agency business. A field survey was conducted to carry out an in-depth interview with key informants. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample. The in-depth interview was made with executives, managers, or restaurant owners who open food delivery services and have experience in online food ordering reservations. The obtained results from the field survey through the in-depth interview were used to analyze the causal model development of customer-based brand equity of online food delivery agency business (food delivery) in Thailand to confirm variables and factors studied how they are appropriate and consistent with the context of Thailand, the obtained results were analyzed as a variable structural model to make a questionnaire for the quantitative study.

The quantitative study in this step was conducted on the basis of a survey research design. The questionnaire was used to collect data from Thai customers in Bangkok having experiences in using services from the agencies and ordering online food by themselves, in the aspects of customer-based brand equity, marketing mix, organizational transparency in customers' opinions, service quality, and customer satisfaction. The collected data were used in a structural equation model analysis (SEM) and statistical analysis.

6. Research Results

Analysis results of the quantitative data

The relationship model among marketing mix, organizational transparency in customers' opinions, service quality, customer-based brand equity, and customer satisfaction was analyzed using maximum likelihood method with LISREL 8.72 to compare the goodness of fit between the developed model and the empirical data. The criteria used to test the goodness of fit between the model and the empirical data were Chi-Square, /df, CFI, GFI, AGFI, RMSEA and SRMR. Model analysis results found /df = 1.012, CFI = 1.00, GFI = 0.97, AGFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.005, and SRMR = 0.015. Therefore, it can be concluded that the structural equation model is appropriate and consistent with the empirical data, and the analysis results can be presented as seen in Figure 1.

7. Qualitative Analysis Results

Interview results revealed that the marketing mix had an influence on customer-based brand equity as a whole. The marketing mix includes reasonable prices, customers are willing to pay, foods ordered are in accordance with the orders customers place, and agents are polite with customers, making customers perceive brand quality, remember brands and purchase products, and remember brand logos. With regard to a platform, it should be easy to use. Tools and buttons should not be complicated, making customers satisfied and use services repeatedly, and end up with word of mouth. In terms of organizational transparency in customers' opinions, customer-based brand equity, and management principles, every agent adopts corporate governance to management. Clarity in management gives rise to perceived service quality like good quality services, consistency of services, etc.

With regard to agent service quality, delivering services to customers had an effect on loyalty of prospective customers. Once they accept services, they will use services of certain brands continuously. In relation to customer satisfaction from using services, repeat purchase and word of mouth occur when customers perceive brand names and logos. They gain trust and are loyal to a certain brand.

Results from group discussion found marketing mix had an effect on customer-based brand equity due to attractive promotion. It encourages customers to purchase products from certain brands continuously as they receive discounts, gifts complaints with periodical promotion. As for organizational transparency in customers' opinions, it had an effect on customer-based brand equity, especially service business being an intangible asset, measured by the way that customers use services repeatedly. In order to achieve customer brand loyalty, there must be explicit and efficient control and monitoring system. In the event that complaints arise, clear regulations and punishments must be provided. Many brands definitely have such regulations. Organizational transparency in customers' opinions had an effect on customer satisfaction. Information disclosure based on standard regulations specified can satisfy customers, enabling customers to talk about certain brands with other people accordingly.

8. Conclusion and Discussion

It is consistent with a study conducted by Mei-Lien [39] showing that marketing mix has significant positive relationship with perceived value and perceived quality, affecting customer satisfaction, customer reliability, customer loyalty, including customer relationship with brands that contributes to perceived quality with a significant positive effect. Customer satisfaction, repeat purchase, word of mouth, and channels of distribution have a significant positive effect but advertising has a significant negative effect on word of mouth. Customer satisfaction has a significant positive effect on customer repeat purchase towards service business.

Information disclosure, explicit control and monitoring system, standards, efficiency and effectiveness, and customer participation have a direct influence on customer-based brand equity. Therefore, the hypothesis 3 is accepted which goes in the

same direction the study of Calveras [9], finding that major factors affecting the adoption of social responsibility and corporate governance to organizations are the size of business and internal organizations making decision to employ social responsibility and corporate governance as a differentiation strategy. This is consistent with a study of Kim, Kim, & Lee [29], showing that hotel business employees in China perceived corporate social responsibility and corporate governance more than employees in Korea did. A study conducted by Huang, Cheng, & Chen [17] found that corporate governance and corporate social responsibility activities could build relationship between executives and employees in tourism business.

With reference to information disclosure, explicit control and monitoring system, standards, efficiency and effectiveness, and customer participation, they have a direct and indirect influence on organizational satisfaction on customers. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted that good governance of private organizations was the system comprising input, process, and output, a group of regulations that would manage relationship among shareholders, board of directors, and executives in order to achieve organization objectives. It was found that good governance in business including service business, or called corporate governance, is similar to good governance in public sector. It is a good system by which organizations are directed and controlled that identifies relationship between corporate social responsibilities and corporate governance. Corporate social responsibilities and corporate governance consist of two perspectives, namely, perspective about corporate operational performance where organizations give information about product quality and innovation ability of products and services [17], and perspective about corporate social performance where organizational activities related to society and organizational stakeholders [16]. Previously, pragmatic corporate social responsibility or corporate governance was paid much attention in different levels. It was targeted to social purposes and be a tool to build sustainability to organizations.

Physical evidence in services related to service reliability, service responsiveness, service confidence, and service attentiveness has a direct influence on customer-based brand equity. This is in the same direction as Ben Ammar, Naoui, & Zaiem [7] said that brand trust was customer willingness. It is associated with brands that can fulfill duties and responsibilities expected. It can satisfy customers who have intention to buy products or use services repeatedly and become loyal to brands. It can be said that customers tend to have confidence and loyalty to brands having good image, reliability, and reputation. Physical evidence in services related to service reliability, service responsiveness, confidence in services, service attentiveness has a direct and indirect influence on organizational satisfaction on customers. This goes in the same direction as Oliver [41], said that satisfaction occurring from expectation towards the perception process of brand efficiency and satisfaction towards activities, customer satisfaction or customer disappointment caused by a comparison between benefits from perceived product or service quality from attitudes and expectation are a dimension affecting satisfaction towards brands in the long run and customer behaviors have an effect on repeat purchase. Positive acceptance will increase customer satisfaction but negative ac-

ceptance will decrease customer satisfaction towards brands. Therefore, building customer satisfaction to ensure customers receive satisfaction or demands at the highest level, business should understand customer demand, enable customers to feel they are received good attention and perceive value rendered by a business, no matter what product or service the business provides.

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