

Contributions of Product Quality, Service Quality, Store Ambiance, and Promotion on Customer Loyalty: The Mediating Role of Brand Identity in Convenience Store Coffee Chains in Bangkok

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Received: June 6, 2022 / Revised: June 20, 2022 / Accepted: June 27, 2022

Abstract

Branding is an essential function enabling businesses to achieve their goals, particularly brand identity, differentiating their products and services from others, and brand loyalty, which is a key to sustainable success. This study investigated the roles of product quality, service quality, store ambiance, and promotion on customer loyalty and the mediating role of brand identity in convenience store coffee chains in Bangkok. Survey data were collected using self-administrative questionnaires from 410 customers using PLS-SEM. The results showed that all four variables, product quality, service quality, store ambiance, and promotion, promote brand identity while only three variables, product quality, service quality, and store ambiance, promote customer loyalty. In addition, brand identity promotes brand loyalty. The mediation test result indicated that brand identity only empirically mediates between promotion and customer loyalty.

Keywords: Product Quality, Service Quality, Store Ambiance, Promotion, Customer Loyalty, Brand Image, Brand Identity

Introduction

With its generous return, modest investment, and significant expansion of the coffee drinking culture, the coffee shop has become a popular business worldwide (Dhisasmito & Kumar, 2020; Ratasuk & Buranasompob, 2021; Ratasuk & Gajesanand, 2020). In ASEAN, the coffee shop industry has proliferated over the past years (Dhisasmito & Kumar, 2020; Karnadi, 2021). According to Dhisasmito and Kumar (2020), the retail coffee market in Indonesia has grown to 268,000 tons per year and was projected to grow 11.4% between 2017 and 2021. Karnadi (2021) revealed that coffee retails in the six largest Asian countries, including Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, enjoyed up to USD 6.5 billion in 2019, which was a six percent annual growth rate from 2014 to 2019 compared to a global average of 5% over the same period, and, in 2019, the region consumed an estimated 1.2 million tons of coffee through retail and foodservice channels. However, with the unexpected severe impacts of COVID-19, according to Karnadi (2021), coffee in food service volume sales in Southeast Asia declined 20% in 2020 compared to 2019. Due to the low start-up cost and unlimited demand in Thailand, coffee shop businesses had proliferated before the

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pandemic hit (Ratasuk & Gajesanand, 2020). According to Statista (2019), the value of the coffee shop industry in Thailand was 21,220 million baht in 2017 and continued with a minimum annual growth rate of 10% Bangkok, with a population of over 8 million people (Worldpopulation, 2018), is also home to many coffee shop businesses. Among various coffee shop business types, convenience-store coffee shops have grown tremendously in popularity, particularly in a big city like Bangkok, known for heavy traffic and the rushing lifestyle (Sripolnork, 2018). With the big city lifestyle, people seek convenient and quick solutions that convenience store coffee shops can effectively fulfill the need (Beard, 2017). A unique feature of this coffee shop is that it opens longer hours than others or even 24/7, allowing it to better respond to city consumers' needs, resulting in rising competition (Billionmindset, 2018). The competition in this coffee shop business sector has grown intensely in Bangkok as it can be seen that almost all convenience stores have their own coffee shops, many of which are chains owned by big companies (Ratasuk & Buranasompob, 2021). To stay competitive and enjoy sustainable success, businesses need to gain customers' loyalty (El-Adly, 2019; Islam et al., 2021). According to Xhema, Metin, and Groumpos (2018), customers always come back to support a business, and this eventually turns to a relationship because of their pleasant experience with its offers. This phenomenon can theoretically be explained by the social exchange theory (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Hence, convenience store coffee chains must know which factors should be focused to promote long lasting relationship with their customers (Filbert & Anthony, 2018).

Even though there are previous studies on factors influencing customer loyalty, the concept has never been explored in the context of convenience-store coffee chains, which is a unique and fast-growing coffee business in Thailand (Islam et al., 2019; Luntungan, Pangemanan, & Rumokoy, 2019; Ratasuk & Gajesanand, 2020). In addition, research on the influences of product quality, perceived service quality, promotion, and store ambiance on brand identity is still scarce in the literature. In this research, the contributions of four factors, namely perceived product quality, perceived service quality, promotion, and store ambiance, to customer loyalty were investigated via brand identity in convenience store coffee chains in Bangkok.

The findings were expected to provide new knowledge to the relevant literature, particularly in customer loyalty, brand image, and brand identity, and a new extension to the social exchange theory. The findings were also expected to provide valuable guidelines for management and marketers in developing effective marketing strategies to promote customer loyalty in their businesses.

Literature Review

This research investigated the contribution of four factors, product, service, promotion, and store ambiance, to customer loyalty and the role of brand image and brand identity based on the social exchange theory.

Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory was developed by the famous sociologist George Homans (Cropanzano et al., 2017). The theory proposes that people behave according to an exchange process in which they try to maximize their benefits and, at the same time, minimize their costs (Cook, 2013). According to the social exchange theory, people compare potential benefits and risks before engaging in relationships with others (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). They tend to terminate a relationship as soon as the risks outweigh the rewards. However, as long as the benefits they perceive are still more than their costs, relationships will be continued. The theory has been used to explain various phenomena in various areas of study, such as management, marketing, and others (Ratasuk, 2021; Ratasuk & Gajesanand, 2020).

Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty refers to an ongoing relationship between businesses and their customers, exhibiting how customers are willing to engage with and repeat their support to businesses (El-Adly, 2019; Islam et al., 2021). Customers' loyalty to businesses is the subsequence of their positive experience and attitudes toward the businesses (Larsson & Broström, 2019; Srivastava & Rai, 2018). Customer loyalty has been studied in a variety of marketing contexts and industries. For example, El-Adly (2019) studied the relationship between perceived value, customer satisfaction, and loyalty in the hotel industry. Islam et al. (2021) studied the impact of corporate social responsibility on customer loyalty via the mediating role of corporate reputation, customer satisfaction, and trust.

Brand Identity

Brand identity refers to a brand's recognition, such as brand name, logo, design, symbol, and many others that distinguish the brand from others and create an emotional relationship with consumers by being committed to their values and delivering as per their expectations (De Chernatony, 1999; Nandan, 2005). Successful businesses are recognized for their strong brand identity since it gives their brands meaning, purpose, and direction (Ghodeswar, 2008; Roy & Banerjee, 2007). Brands identify and differentiate a business's products or services from competitors according to their values by developing a solid brand identity to represent the business's intended image and promise to consumers (Casais & Monteiro, 2019; Chung & Byrom, 2020; Essamri, Mckechnie, & Winklhofer, 2019). Brand identity has been in the spotlight for scholars in several fields, mainly marketing. For example, Casidy, Prentice, and Wymer (2019) studied the effects of brand identity on brand performance in the service sector.

Perceived Product Quality

Perceived product quality refers to consumers' perception and experience with purchased products (Ariffin et al., 2016). Prior studies reveal that perceived product quality fosters several preferred business outcomes: brand loyalty, customer trust, customer satisfaction, brand image, and customer repurchase intentions (Nikhashemi, Valaei, & Tarolfder, 2017; Ratasuk & Gajesanand, 2020). High-quality products satisfy customers and drive pleasant attitudes toward companies and brands (Saleem et al., 2015). Sari and Giantari (2020) found that product quality is critical in making customers repeat their support to businesses. Ratasuk and Gajesanand (2020) revealed that perceived product quality promotes brand image and repurchase intentions in gas station coffee shops in Bangkok.

Perceived Service Quality

Perceived service quality refers to customers' perception of service performance they have experienced compared to their expectations (Kasiri et al., 2017). Service quality has been widely explored in several study areas, such as education, hospitality, food service, and others. (Panjaitan & Yuliati, 2016). High service quality leads to desirable business outcomes: brand image, customer satisfaction, loyalty, and repurchase intentions. (Fatima, Malik, & Shabbir, 2018; Ratasuk & Gajesanand, 2020; Shankar & Jebarajakirthy, 2019). Ratasuk and Buranasompob (2021) examined the roles of perceived service quality on brand image and repurchase intentions in convenience store coffee chains in Bangkok.

Store Ambience

Store ambience or atmosphere refers to visible elements and environments inside and outside stores, such as lighting, smell/scent, temperature, noise, and music (Abimnwi &

Njuguna, 2015; Morrison et al., 2011). These elements have also been found to influence customers' emotions and satisfaction, significantly impacting their buying decision (Cloete & Semente, 2022; Deka, 2019; Morrison et al., 2011). Store ambiance has been studied in various research fields (Deka, 2019; Morrison et al., 2011; Nacass, 2018). Barros et al., (2019) examined the influence of store atmosphere on consumers' positive emotional responses and impulsive purchase behavior. Ilmi, Darma, and Wijayanti (2020) studied the roles of store atmosphere and customer satisfaction and the mediating role of service quality in a restaurant business in Indonesia.

Promotion

Promotion refers to the combination of business communication efforts to market products and services to consumers (Yoo, Donthu, & Lee, 2000). It is an essential element in the marketing mix. It includes five promotion mix elements: advertising, personal selling, direct marketing, sales promotions, and public relations (Jasmani & Sunarsi, 2020; Oladepo & Abimbola, 2015). The promotion mix has been explored in varied research areas and contexts (Aldebi & Aljboory, 2018; Kristanto et al., 2021; Sugiono, Nurwulandari, & Khairina, 2021). Many previous studies showed that promotion improves businesses' communication effectiveness with their customers and effectively promotes brand image (Havidz & Mahaputra, 2020; Hermiyenti & Wardi, 2019; Huang, Nie, & Zhang, 2018). Jasmani and Sunarsi (2020) investigated the contribution of the promotion mix on customer purchase decisions of Sari Roti Products in South Tangerang. There is also evidence that promotion can increase customer satisfaction and promote customer repurchase intentions (Ghezlbash & Khodadadi, 2017; Prianggoro & Sitio, 2019; Ratasuk & Gajesanand, 2020; Setiawan, 2018).

Product Quality, Service Quality, Store Ambience, and Promotion, and Brand Identity and Customer Loyalty

According to the social exchange theory, a relationship is developed when individuals perceive that it provides more benefits than the costs they have to pay to gain the benefits. Thus, customers will return to support a business after considering their total experience with their first visit and whether their benefits are more than their costs (Ratasuk, 2021; Ratasuk & Gajesanand, 2020). Products and services allow businesses and brands to differentiate themselves from others (Ghodeswar, 2008; Nandan, 2005). Good product and service performance fosters customers' impressions, recognizing and remembering their brands (Stompff, 2003). Customers identify product and service features and associate them with their brands (Esmailpour & Hoseini, 2017; He & Li, 2011). Underwood (2003) revealed that packaging, a part of products, can promote brand identity by making brands more accessible to be recognized. Thus, high product and service quality should enhance brand identity. Product and service quality also promote customer satisfaction and drive them to return to stores to continue to support businesses (Hsu et al., 2018; Rahmawati & Sentana, 2021; Ratasuk & Gajesanand, 2020; Taufik et al., 2022; Xhema, Metin, & Groumpos, 2018). Park and Kim (2022) stated that good service can foster customers' satisfaction and positive attitudes toward brands and loyal to them. According to Hsu et al. (2018), product design which is included in product quality can foster customer loyalty of smartphone users in Taiwan. Hence, product and service quality should promote customers' loyalty to businesses and their brands in this context.

Besides, store ambiance and promotion also increase customers' recognition of brands by presenting brands' characteristics and features, allowing brands to differentiate themselves from others, particularly their rivals (Petty, 2016; Yuan et al., 2016). Thus, both store ambiance and promotion are expected to be positively associated with brand identity since the excellent ambiance and effective promotion build customers' pleasant emotions and satisfaction with its uniqueness, and customers tend to associate it with its brands, helping them differentiate their

pleasant experience from others (Burt & Carralero-Encinas, 2000; Pamungkas & Pramesti, 2021). Accordingly, decent store ambiance and effective promotion create a pleasant experience and satisfaction for customers bringing them back to stores repeatedly and eventually becoming loyal (Allender & Richards, 2012; Konuk, 2018; Kwon et al., 2020; Sharma & Patra, 2021; Suartina et al., 2022). Yoon and Park (2018) revealed that in-store experience drives U.S. customers to return to stores. Suartina et al. (2022) mentioned that effective promotion could lead to customer loyalty in e-commerce. Therefore, store ambiance and promotion are supposed to associate with brand loyalty positively.

At last, a concrete brand identity allows customers to recognize, distinguish, and remember a brand resulting in firmly developing their loyalty to the brand (Coelho, Rita, & Santos, 2018; Jin, Yoon, & Lee, 2019; Keshtidar et al., 2018). The study of Jin, Yoon, and Lee (2019) unveiled a positive relationship between brand identity and brand loyalty in Korea. According to Zarei, Feiz, and Maradi (2020), brand identity was found to influence brand loyalty via brand attractiveness in electronic products. Thereby, brand identity is proposed to associate brand loyalty positively.

All the proposed relationships between all variables on the ground of the social exchange theory are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis	
H1	Perceived product quality positively influences brand identity.
H2	Perceived service quality positively influences brand identity.
H3	Store ambiance positively influences brand identity.
H4	Promotion positively influences brand identity.
H5	Perceived product quality positively affects customer loyalty.
H6	Perceived service quality positively affects customer loyalty.
H7	Store ambiance positively affects customer loyalty.
H8	Promotion positively affects customer loyalty.
H9	Brand identity positively impacts customer loyalty.
H10	Brand identity positively mediates the relationship between perceived product quality and customer loyalty
H11	Brand identity positively mediates the relationship between perceived service quality and customer loyalty
H12	Brand identity positively mediates the relationship between perceived store ambiance and customer loyalty
H13	Brand identity positively mediates the relationship between promotion and customer loyalty

Methodology

Population, Sample Group, and Sample Selection

This study aimed to study the customers of convenience store coffee chains in Bangkok. Therefore, the population is considered unknown. Stratified random sampling was conducted to select 500 customers to approach from 50 stores, beginning with dividing all 50 districts of Bangkok into 10 area groups. In each area group, five stores were randomly selected, and in each store, ten customers were randomly approached (Acharya et al., 2013; Ratasuk & Gajesanand, 2020; Singkran & Kandasamy, 2016). However, only 410 customers agreed to participate, or an 82% response rate. This sample size is considered adequate for an unknown (Ahmad & Halim, 2017).

Research Tool

Self-administrative questionnaires with structured question sets were used since it is suitable for collecting a large amount of data in a limited time (Bryman & Bell, 2015). They included the demographic characteristics of respondents, including gender, age, income, and

education, and sets of question items measuring the perceptions and attitudes towards product quality, service quality, store ambiance, promotion, brand identity, and customer loyalty adapted from prior studies, as presented in Table 2. They have been proven to have sufficient validity and reliability levels and measured using the five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 as strongly disagree to 5 as strongly agree.

Table 2 Characteristics of the Sample

Variables	Sources	Samples of Question Items
Customer Loyalty	He, Li, and Harris (2012)	<i>“Even if another brand has the same features as this coffee chain, I would prefer to buy my coffee from this coffee chain” and “I would prefer to buy this coffee chain. If there is another brand as good as this coffee chain, I prefer to buy my coffee from this coffee chain”.</i>
Brand Identity	He et al. (2012)	<i>“This coffee chain has a distinctive identity” and “This coffee chain stands out from its competitors”.</i>
Perceived Product quality	Sullivan and Kim (2018)	<i>“The quality of the product sold on the coffee chain was excellent” and “The performance of the product sold on the coffee chain was excellent”.</i>
Perceived Service Quality	Jani and Han (2011)	<i>“Staff provides genuine services” and “Staff provides efficient and capable services”.</i>
Store Ambiance	Akram et al. (2016)	<i>“The store is a pleasant place to visit” and “The store layout is well organized and designed”.</i>
Promotion	Wang, Qi, Kim, and Benbasat (2016)	<i>“The coffee chain always offers discounts and promotions” and “The coffee chain advertises the promotion in social media”.</i>

Control Variable

Four control variables are included in this research which are gender, age, income, and education. In prior research, these control variables affected brand identity and customer loyalty (Hew, Badaruddin, & Moorhy, 2017; Le & Supphellen, 2017). Their descriptive statistics are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Characteristics of the Sample (Descriptive Statistic)

Gender	Male	183 (55.37%)
	Female	227 (44.63%)
AGE	18 to 20 years old	50 (12.20%)
	21 to 30 years old	162 (39.51%)
	31 to 40 years old	145 (35.37%)
	41 to 50 years old	40 (9.76%)
	51 to 60 years old	13 (3.17%)
	Older than 60 years old	0 (0%)

Table 3 Characteristics of the Sample (Descriptive Statistic) (Cont.)

Income (Per Month)	Less than 10,000 Baht	63 (15.37%)
	10,001 to 20,000 Baht	194 (47.32%)
	20,001 to 30,000 Baht	111 (27.07%)
	30,001 to 40,000 Baht	37 (9.02%)
	40,001 to 50,000 Baht	5 (1.22%)
	More than 50,000 Baht	0 (0%)
Education	High school	63 (15.37%)
	Associate degree	135 (32.93%)
	Undergraduate degree	168 (40.98%)
	Master degree	42 (10.24%)
	Doctoral degree	2 (0.49%)

Estimation Method

Program Warp PLS version 8.0 was used to conduct a structural equation modeling analysis and the Sobel test to test the mediation. Warp PLS works well with a complex research model with several variables and relationship paths (Kock, 2017). The program is also effective for formative and reflective scales (Hair, 2014). It has also been used in varied research areas, for instance, management, marketing, human resource, and other social research areas (Ratasuk, 2020; Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2019, 2020; Richter et al., 2015).

The Research Ethics Committee (REC), with a reference number of PIM- REC 005/2563, was granted to affirm the ethical standard of the tool and process used in this research's data collection.

Results

Prior to performing PLS- SEM analysis, the reliability testing was reported using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability coefficients resented in Table 4. Since none of the variables' coefficients were lower than 0.7, the reliability is ideal (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The validity was also tested. The results showed acceptable discriminant validity because all square root values of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were higher than their relevant correlations presented in Table 3 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Also, the full collinearity VIF of all variables was lower than 3.3, indicating that the multicollinearity and common method bias (CMB) were not serious issues in this study (Hair Jr, Haward, & Nitzl, 2020).

Table 4 Correlation Between Constructs VS Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha coefficient	Composite Reliability coefficient	Loyalty	BranID	Product	Service	Decor	Promo
Loyalty	0.925	0.947	(0.856)					
BranID	0.900	0.930	0.548	(0.895)				
Product	0.881	0.918	0.683	0.576	(0.866)			
Service	0.924	0.952	0.679	0.584	0.767	(0.884)		
Deccor	0.910	0.937	0.637	0.613	0.699	0.744	(0.887)	
Promo	0.870	0.939	0.499	0.721	0.548	0.539	0.571	(0.957)

Source: * p-value < 0.05, ** p-value < 0.01; The Square Root Values Of AVE Are Displayed In The Parentheses; Loyalty=Customer Loyalty, Branid=Brand Identity, Product=Product Quality, Service=Service Quality, Decor=Store Ambiance, Promo=Promotion.

Also, the convergent validity was satisfied since all factor loading values were above 0.7, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Factor Loadings and Cross-Loading

Type	Loyalty	BranID	Product	Service	Decor	Promo
Loyalty 1	(0.865)	-0.074	0.010	0.044	0.002	0.039
Loyalty 2	(0.826)	0.198	0.171	-0.067	-0.088	-0.147
Loyalty 3	(0.867)	-0.065	-0.097	0.002	0.095	0.083
Loyalty 4	(0.868)	-0.049	-0.076	0.017	-0.013	0.019
BranID 1	-0.024	(0.850)	0.049	-0.129	0.217	-0.023
BranID 2	0.013	(0.914)	0.058	-0.027	-0.086	-0.107
BranID 3	0.035	(0.902)	-0.067	0.003	-0.015	0.131
BranID 4	-0.026	(0.911)	-0.038	0.144	-0.101	0.000
Product 1	0.058	-0.073	(0.888)	0.061	0.084	0.022
Product 2	-0.127	0.023	(0.837)	-0.117	-0.138	-0.013
Product 3	0.063	0.053	(0.872)	0.050	0.047	-0.010
Service 1	0.118	-0.107	-0.004	(0.878)	0.152	0.047
Service 2	-0.046	0.099	0.056	(0.891)	-0.117	-0.063
Service 3	-0.032	-0.035	0.041	(0.881)	0.108	-0.033
Service 4	-0.038	0.042	-0.093	(0.884)	-0.140	0.050
Décor 1	0.077	-0.095	-0.030	0.172	(0.899)	0.101
Décor 2	-0.052	0.087	0.082	-0.037	(0.874)	-0.139
Décor 3	0.022	0.014	-0.030	-0.029	(0.899)	-0.064
Décor 4	-0.050	-0.004	-0.021	-0.109	(0.876)	0.101
Promo 1	0.004	0.025	-0.009	0.045	0.010	(0.957)
Promo 2	-0.004	-0.025	0.009	-0.045	-0.010	(0.957)

Source: Loyalty=Customer Loyalty, Branid=Brand Identity, Product=Product Quality, Service=Service Quality, Decor=Store Ambiance, Promo=Promotion

The model fit indices confirmed the quality of the model. All ten indices were satisfactory, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Model Fit Indices

Model Fit Indices	Coefficient	Result
Average Path Coefficient (APC)	0.177**	Significant
Average R-square (ARS)	0.589**	Significant
Average Adjusted R-Square (AARS)	0.583**	Significant
Average Variance Inflation Factor (AVIF)	2.130	Ideal
Average full Variance Inflation Factor (AFVIF)	2.476	Ideal
Tenenhaus GoF Index (GoF)	0.713	Large
Simpson's Paradox Ratio (SPR)	0.933	Acceptable
R-square Contribution Ratio (RSCR)	1.000	Acceptable
Statistical Suppression Ratio (SSR)	0.933	Acceptable
Nonlinear Bivariate Causality Direction Ratio (NLBCDR)	0.900	Acceptable

PLS-SE Results

After the model quality was tested to be satisfactory, the PLS-SEM proceeded to test the proposed hypotheses. The findings are presented in Figure 2. Also, the mediation test was performed using the Sobel test and presented after the PLS-SEM results.

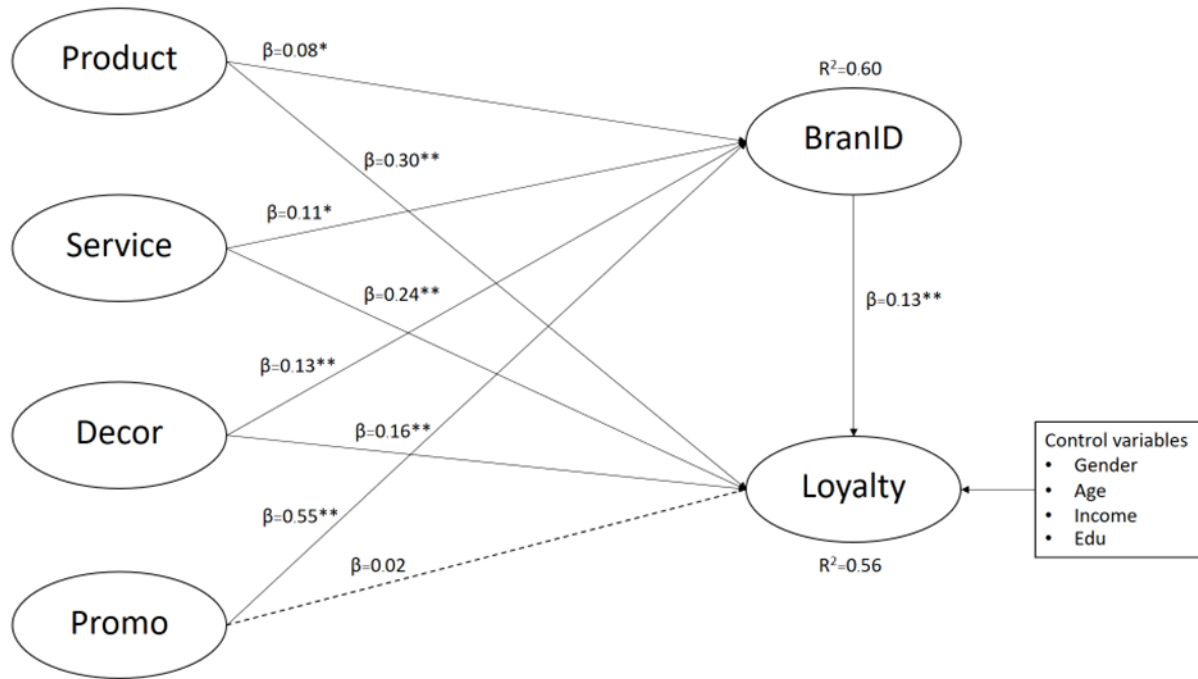


Figure 2 Main Model Results

Source - ** and * means p-value <0.01 and <0.05
 - Solid Lines Refer to Significant Paths, and Dashed Lines Refer to Non-Significant Ones.

The PLS-SEM analysis results revealed in Figure 2 can be concluded as follows.

Hypothesis 1 proposed a positive relationship between perceived product quality and brand identity ($\beta=0.08$; $p=0.05$). The results indicated a positive and statistically significant relationship; thus, hypothesis 1 is accepted.

Hypothesis 2 proposed a positive relationship between perceived service quality and brand identity ($\beta=0.11$; $p=0.01$). The results showed a positive and statistically significant relationship; thus, hypothesis 2 is accepted.

Hypothesis 3 proposed a positive association between store ambiance and brand identity ($\beta=0.13$; $p<0.01$). The results revealed a positive and significant association; thus, hypothesis 3 is accepted.

Hypothesis 4 proposed a positive association between promotion and brand identity ($\beta=0.55$; $p<0.01$). The results indicated a positive and significant association; thus, hypothesis 4 is accepted.

Hypothesis 5 proposed a positive association between perceived product quality and customer loyalty ($\beta=0.30$; $p<0.01$). The results revealed a positive and significant association; thus, hypothesis 5 is supported.

Hypothesis 6 proposed a positive relationship between perceived service quality and customer loyalty ($\beta=0.24$; $p<0.01$). The results indicated a positive and significant relationship; thus, hypothesis 6 is supported.

Hypothesis 7 proposed a positive relationship between store ambiance and customer loyalty ($\beta=0.16$; $p<0.01$). The results showed a positive and significant relationship; thus, hypothesis 7 is supported.

Hypothesis 8 proposed a positive relationship between promotion and customer loyalty ($\beta=0.02$; $p=0.35$). The results indicated a positive but insignificant relationship; thus, hypothesis 8 is not supported.

Hypothesis 9 proposed a positive relationship between brand identity and customer loyalty ($\beta=0.13$; $p<0.01$). The results indicated a positive and significant relationship; thus, hypothesis 9 is supported.

The mediating roles of brand identity on the relationship between the four factors, perceived product quality, service quality, store ambiance and promotion, and customer loyalty, were also examined. The results from the Sobel test suggested by Preacher and Hayes (2004) revealed that brand identity only fully mediates between promotion and brand loyalty ($t=2.552$ $p=0.01$). Thus, hypotheses 10, 11, and 12 are not supported, and only hypothesis 13 is supported.

The findings also presented that customer loyalty was not statistically associated with any control variables: Gender ($\beta=-0.03$; $p=0.29$), Age ($\beta=-0.04$; $p=0.22$), Income ($\beta=-0.00$; $p=0.47$), and Education ($\beta=-0.01$; $p=0.40$).

Discussion and Conclusion

This research aimed to examine the roles of product quality, service quality, store ambiance, and promotion on customer loyalty and the mediating roles of brand identity in convenience-store coffee chains in Bangkok. The results indicated that product quality, service quality, store ambiance, and promotion promote the chains' brand identity. Even though the results are consistent with prior studies that the four factors are positively related to brand identity, the number of related prior studies that examine the roles of the four factors on brand identity is minimal (Esmaeilpour & Hoseini, 2017; He & Li, 2011; Petty, 2016; Stompff, 2003; Yuan et al., 2016). For example, Underwood (2003) found a positive association between perceived packaging quality and brand identity by making brands more accessible to be recognized. Esmaeilpour and Hoseini (2017) found a positive association between perceived service quality and brand identity in insurance companies in Iran. In the context of convenience store coffee chains, customers who are satisfied with provided products, services, store ambiance, and promotions of coffee chains tend to recognize and remember their brands. This may be because the business's quality products and services, store ambiance, and promotion impress them by fulfilling their needs, driving them to differentiate, recognize, and remember the businesses' brands.

The findings also showed positive relationships between perceived product quality, service quality, and store ambiance with customer loyalty, which align with prior studies (Hsu et al., 2018; Park & Kim, 2022). For example, Park and Kim (2022) found a positive relationship between service quality and brand loyalty to offline service quality in Omni-channel (OC) retail environment. Hsu et al. (2018) showed that product design, which is a part of product quality, has indirect positive influences on brand loyalty to smartphones in Taiwan. Furoida and Maftukhah (2018) study revealed that store ambiance and service quality promote brand loyalty of cafe customers by increasing their satisfaction. In the context of convenience store coffee chains, customers who perceive high product quality, service quality, and store

ambiance tend to have a higher level of loyalty to the businesses and their brands. This may be because, according to the social exchange theory, the customers are satisfied with their total experience from products and services offered, as well as in-store ambiance that outweigh their costs, such as the price they pay, the time they spend to travel to the store and other costs.

Moreover, the findings presented a positive association between brand image and brand loyalty, harmonizing with previous research (Zarei, Feiz, & Moradi, 2020). For example, Zarei, Feiz, and Moradi (2020) found an indirect positive relationship between brand identity and brand loyalty via the brand attractiveness of electronic products. According to Jin, Yoon, and Lee (2019), brand identity is positively associated with the brand loyalty of Korean customers. For convenience store coffee chains, customers who perceive a high brand identity tend to have high loyalty to the brands. This may be because coffee chains with a unique and clear identity, such as an easy-to-remember logo, personalized colors, standardized and differentiated staff uniforms, unique menu, standardized and comfortable store ambiance, and many others, impress customers and make it easy for them to recognize and remember and always think of the brands when they need to buy coffee.

Lastly, according to the results, brand identity mediates the relationship between promotion and brand loyalty. This may be explained in the context of convenience store coffee chains that the promotion offered by the coffee chains varies from brand to brand, promoting outstanding characters and features to remember and attracting customers to revisit the stores repeatedly.

Research Contributions

This research provides new knowledge in customer loyalty research with additional evidence of the antecedent roles of the four factors, perceived product quality, service quality, store ambiance, and promotion, along with the mediating roles of brand identity. Since the associations between the four factors and brand identity are limited, this study also supplies a new piece of knowledge and additional evidence to the brand literature. Also, this new knowledge was investigated in the context of convenience store coffee chains for the first time. Lastly, this study provides additional evidence in applying the social exchange theory to explain a phenomenon in a new context, like convenience store coffee chains in Bangkok.

Practical Contributions

The study provides some practical guidelines for management in promoting customer loyalty in their business. For sustainable business success, management should better understand how customers' loyalty to their businesses is developed. The results suggest as follows: 1) According to the findings, product quality is the priority factor to which stores should always pay attention. Stores should regularly focus on providing a wide variety of menu selections using quality ingredients, for example, quality coffee beans, milk, and others, and conduct a strict quality assurance process to ensure that all products are delivered to customers promptly. 2) They should regularly innovate and create signature menus that differentiate their business from others, including innovative and unique packaging. 3) The findings also indicate that service quality is the second after product quality that is important in developing customer loyalty. Hence, stores should focus on providing signature excellent standardized service with friendly and courteous practices that well represent their brands from well-trained professional staff who are always smiley, attentive, and service-minded dressed in proper uniforms presenting with visible and clear brand logo and color. By doing this, brands will maximize customers' satisfaction and trust, differentiate themselves from their competitors, and promote customers' loyalty to them. 4) Also, stores should be well designed with a signature ambiance representing unique and clarified brand characteristics with a pleasant mood and tone that

emotionally drive customers to spend longer time with them, for example, equipment and furniture with brand logo and color, owned brand music. A clear and differentiated store ambiance will be easy to recognize and remember inviting customers to revisit often. 5) Stores should offer promotions that can effectively promote brand identity, for example, sales promotions giving premiums with a brand logo like mugs, caps, t-shirts, dolls, and others, and advertising promoting brands' uniqueness and features. Promotions highlighting promoting brand identity will foster brand recognition and promote customer loyalty. Lastly, Management should create a unique and clear brand identity by developing and delivering features that emphasize the representation of brands, such as organizational work culture, standard employee practices, standard staff appearances, business gimmicks, brand colors, and brand mascot. Moreover, all the suggestions should be in line with one another.

Limitations and Future Directions

This research has some limitations that require consideration. 1) the data were collected from only 50 convenience store coffee chains in the Bangkok area, which may not represent the true population well. As a result, it may have limited the results' generalizability. 2) the survey was conducted using a self-administered questionnaire which may have caused subjective bias. 3) this study included only the four factors. Many other variables may contribute to customer loyalty that should be explored to develop novel knowledge. Finally, the results may only present the correlations, not their causality, because they were collected cross-sectionally. Future research is suggested to 1) examine other factors and variables' contributions to customer loyalty, for example, perceived value and brand image. 2) apply the same model in other business contexts, such as hotels, restaurants, and airlines. 3) explore the roles of 4 factors on other desirable business outcomes, such as company performance and brand equity.

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