

Development on the Strategies of Omni Channel Marketing to Build the Customer Loyalty

Dararat Vichitsopapan, Sudawan Somjai, Ananta Rusmee

and Chandej Charoenwiriyaikul

Graduate School, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Thailand

s61584917040@ssru.ac.th, sudawan.so@ssru.ac.th, chandej.ch@ssru.ac.th

ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were 1) to study the factors affecting the customer loyalty and 2) to study the Omni Channel Marketing model. The mixed research methods were used namely the quantitative research and qualitative research. In terms of quantitative research, the sample group consisted of 420 service users of AIS Telewiz service centers in Bangkok. The data was analyzed with structural equation modeling. In terms of qualitative research, the data was collected from the in-depth interview with 25 key informants. The research results revealed that 1) the relationship quality influenced the customer loyalty the most, followed by the perception of experiences from Omni Channel Marketing, in-store perception of experiences, brand value, and perception of online experiences, respectively. 2) The Omni Channel Marketing model was (2.1) that customers could choose to view products and features through any device channel. All customer information would be saved. The next time of using the services via any channel, the employees were able to offer products and services immediately. (2.2) When the customers considered products from various online channels, the customers could come to see the real products at the AIS Telewiz shop to make the decision again. They could buy products at the shop or the customers could go back to reconsider and order products via online channels. The system will connect to the central AIS and will bring the products of the central warehouse to sell to customers. (2.4) When the customer order product online from the shop, the customer can choose which shop to pick up the product or have it delivered to the customer's house.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE OF PROBLEM

The current competitive business conditions are different from previously. This makes the traditional marketing that focuses on creating quality products and services or distinction from competitors become modern marketing that focuses on consumer centricity and the attempt to create the highest satisfaction for consumers. The consumer-centered marketing focuses on creating consumer satisfaction, engagement and loyalty by creating an impressive experience that is fundamental to building loyalty to the existing customer base and expanding word-of-mouth to new customers. Thus, the experiential marketing concept is important to the new era of marketing. The business organizations must bring the customer experience to enhance and add value to the business.

The experiential marketing is to create the Holistic Experience among the customers. This is the attempt to create the good experiences to the customers in all touch points leading to the marketing strategy called Omni Channel Marketing. It occurred from the way businesses tried to create the

consistent, connected experience for their customers through multi-channel shopping that could reach customers from the same database through the complete link among all channels (Brickey, 2016).

The Omni Channel Marketing is therefore the network linkage across all marketing channels to facilitate customers. It offers alternatives for making purchase decisions anytime, anywhere, or managing multi-channel collaboration and where organizations interact with customers most effectively. This ensures good customer experience (Verhoef & Kannan & Inman, 2015; Hüseyinoğlu, Galipoğlu, & Kotzab, 2017).

The experiential marketing strategy under Omni Channel Marketing has become the strategy that focuses on attracting and paying attention to customer relationship management as part of the relationship marketing concept putting emphasis on building good relationships with customers until eventually leading to their loyalty. The telecommunication business is one of the oligopoly due to the relatively high barriers to entry for new competitors both in terms of funding and various legal requirements. The 3 mobile network operators, AIS, TRUE and DTAC, are still the main players in this market. When considering the revenue in the first quarter of 2021, AIS was able to generate revenues of up to 45,861 million baht, followed by TRUE and DTAC, with revenues of 35,425 million baht and 20,516 million baht, respectively. It was found that AIS stands out from making a net profit of 6,644 million baht or 14.5% of total revenue leaving the considerable distance from competitors such as TRUE and DTAC (Longtunman, 2021).

The development on the strategies of Omni Channel Marketing allows companies to link various databases both from offline and online channels together. This is for AIS customers to have access to the complete service experience. Apart from developing the Omni Channel Marketing and helping the customers get good experience, it also helps customers to be impressed as the foundation of relationship marketing. When customers are satisfied and trust in products and services until being bound with the organization, it reflects the good relationship between service providers and customers. On one hand, the quality of relationships that arise is also linked to customer loyalty particularly in building trust as the key factor in customer retention (Reichheld & Schefer, 2000) and also results in the customer loyalty (Liu, Guo, & Lee, 2011; Ndubisi, 2017; Reichheld, 2003).

Research objectives

The objectives of this research were to study the factors affecting the customer loyalty and to study the Omni Channel Marketing model of AIS Telewiz.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concepts and theories about Omni Channel Marketing

The Omni Channel Marketing refers to how businesses strive to create the consistent, connected experience for their customers through cross-channel purchases. The customers can be reached from a single database that is fully linked across all channels (Wilson Perumal & Company, 2015). The key to this approach is to focus on creating satisfying spending experience for customers taking into account the customer as the center of practice. For example, when customers want to compare information and place an order but want to pick up at the branch, the system will check the warehouse. When the customer enters the shop, the employees will retrieve information about products that customers want and can provide services immediately. In addition, the employees can also extract customer data that exists in the system to analyze customer behaviors leading to other product or service offerings that satisfy customers. This will increase the chances of making sales, creating impression, and engagement with customers (Kittipat Dumrongphat, 2016).

The business with traditional storefront turns to change by starting from adding online channels to join with existing channels to change the trading style for new products to be exciting. The customers

will engage in shopping and will be enhanced on the positive shopping experience. The bond with the brand can also be built until leading to loyalty of the shop or the brand eventually.

At the same time, Omni Channel Marketing also means network connection. All marketing channels are unified in order to facilitate consumers to have the choices in making purchase decisions anytime, anywhere, or in managing the interaction of multiple channels. It is the point where organizations have relationship with customers in the most efficient way. This ensures positive customer experience (Verhoef, Kannan & Inman, 2015; Hüseyinoğlu, Galipoğlu, & Kotzab, 2017).

The current Omni Channel Marketing relies on various tools of retailers to operate together in an integrated manner in order to encourage businesses to generate income by satisfying every customer point. This also creates engagement between consumers and shops to reduce the chances of changing the brand of consumers. It agreed with Phachara Arayakarnkul (2019) stating that technology has become the fifth factor in our daily life. Consumers expect real-time service through a variety of channels both offline and online. Therefore, Omni Channel Marketing has shaped the offline and online channels into one in order to create the best experience for consumers naturally and without interruption.

Staflund, & Kersmark (2015) said that customers now expect shopping experience that offers access to a wide range of preferences on channels that are convenient for themselves. Thus, Omni Channel Marketing is a system that can truly meet the needs of consumers. According to Omni Channel Marketing in the Shopper Experience Study article, it was described not to be just the distribution channel that prioritizes the convenience of the buyers. It must also be continuity as customers choose to shop and must not make customers feel threatened or intruded. It also creates the shopping experience for customers through Omni Channel Marketing that will integrate all distribution channels to link information altogether. This can facilitate customers and create the collaborative and integrated experience for each distribution channel (Skorupa, 2014).

The components of Omni Channel Marketing consisted of (Ornrampha Huajai et al., 2014):

1. Linking channels to consumers or customers (Integrating strategically build in integrated channel)
2. Maximizing Big DATA to enhance customer's expectation. This is to bring data from Big Data to be analyzed and use it to adjust the products and services in accordance with the satisfaction and expectations along with meeting the needs of individual consumers or customers (Personalized Promotion). Big Data is the result of data collection from a variety of formats from various channels to be processed for understanding the data in depth. The use of Big Data applied into Omni Channel Marketing is the use of the above information to analyze the marketing activities to create experiences above the expectations for customers which consists of 4 parts.
3. Consistently Delivering Consumer-oriented experience. The adoption of technology and innovations helps creating the experience that meets the needs of customers anywhere, anytime, impressing customers with orders, inquiries, information checks, and services.

Customer loyalty concepts and theories

The competitiveness in the global market has increased the importance of customer loyalty and is more than ever a mean to achieve long-term competitive advantage (Aksoy, 2013). Service providers must employ innovative strategies to build trust and loyalty of their existing customers (Demirci & Kara, 2014) in order to engage customers in positive goods and product or organizational mentions. Encountering the increasing competition, many service companies realize the importance of building stronger relationships with their existing customers (Morgan & Rego, 2016).

The customers with positive or negative referrals, whether online or offline, received close attention from the company's prospective customers. Customer word of mouth is therefore an effective marketing tool (Brown, Broderick & Lee, 2017). At the same time, customer referral behavior reflects the good relationship and engagement that customers have with the company (Eisingerich, Auh & Merlo, 2014). That is an important strategic goal for companies looking to build customer loyalty. It is

the driving force behind the company's long-term success (Rust, Lemon & Zeithaml, 2014). For example, long-term loyal customers are more likely to expand relationships and provide better rewards for service providers more than any other customer segment (Srinivasan, Anderson & Ponnnavolu, 2002). In addition, loyal customers often act as trusted advocates through social media, connecting their networks of friends, relatives and potential customers to become informal corporate clients (See-To & Ho, 2014). At the same time, the relationship formed by those links gradually increase more closeness due to the increase in trust over time.

Loyalty is a key variable that has been noticed by a number of academics studying relationship marketing across industries. It divides customer loyalty into two dimensions; behavioral loyalty and attitude loyalty. The behavioral loyalty is an expression of the customer's behavior in making repeat purchases because they like a particular brand or service (Jiang, Jiang, Cai & Liu, 2015). However, Høst & Knie-Andersen (2014) suggested that measuring behavioral loyalty alone may not be enough. This is because it measures the loyalty of a particular customer. Attitude Loyalty needs to be measured along with it. Attitude Loyalty reflects the emotional and psychological needs of the customer for the repeat purchase and recommending others to buy or use the service again (Baumann et al., 2012).

The customer loyalty studies highlight the customer's commitment to support or willingness to continue to pay for the goods or services of particular service provider in the future (Chai et al., 2015). Although various circumstances and environmental factors are changed, such customer loyalty persists. The concept of Agustin & Singh (2015) explained that loyalty affected the willingness to take action to continually increase the relationship with a particular service provider through the purchase/reuse or the increased quantity/frequency of purchase of goods or services.

The customer loyalty describes the behavioral and attitude characteristics of customer loyalty (Jin, Line, & Merkebu, 2015). The customer loyalty is defined as the level of attitude and behavior that indicates intent to patronize or repeat purchases, telling about an optimistic service provider, selection of service use from one current service provider solely even though they cost more than others (Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2000). The analysis was on the customer behaviors and attitudes by measuring attitudes and loyalty. Most academicians will measure preferences which are the clear indication of preference for particular provider (Thurau, Gwinner, & Gremler, 2002) without considering switching to another provider even if other service providers charge cheaper (El-Manstrly, 2016).

That attitude-based loyalty measuring can also be done with the intention behavioral questionnaires. Some academicians suggest the methods to measure the customer loyalty, especially in the hospitality industry, by assessing the customer's intent to behave. Such behaviors are assessed on repeat purchase intent (Zeithaml, 2000) and intent to continue using the service (Patterson, 2007). Only those customers who are willing to continue using the service and recommend the service to others are considered to have a high level of corporate loyalty (Patterson, 2007; Aydin & Ozer, 2005; Caruana, 2004).

Behavioral loyalty measures are based on purchase frequency, regular and consistent repeat buying behavior. The behavior is the true reflection of the customer's feelings (Izogo, 2015). However, repeat buying behavior can be caused by various reasons and may not be loyal or not related to loyalty at all. It may be due to other reasons such as convenience, coincidence, necessity, or the continued unsatisfactory use of the service by the customers. They think it is the right choice for themselves or that they may incur costs if they switch providers (Aydin & Ozer, 2006; Caruana, 2004). This is difficult to do but it can be done by observing certain behaviors that customers exhibit (Kursunluoglu, 2011) such as recommending products or services that they use to other people, complimenting the

service provider to others, defending when others refer to service providers that are being used by customers in a bad way (Mishra, Kesharwani, & Das, 2016).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research used the combination of research methods. In terms of quantitative research, the sample group consisted of 420 service users of AIS Telewiz service centers in Bangkok. The size of the sample was determined using the criteria 20 times the observed variable using the layered sampling method to collect the data with questionnaires. The content validity was tested with the IOC ranging from 0.80-1.00. It was found that the reliability coefficient (Cronbach’s alpha) of the observed variable scale used in this research ranged from 0.889 to 0.971. It was entirely 0.991 and analyzed by structural equation modeling.

In the qualitative research, the data was collected by in-depth interviews with key informants (1) 5 AIS Telewiz executives, (2) 10 AIS Telewiz managers in Bangkok, and (3) 10 users of AIS Telewiz Service Center in Bangkok for not less than 3 years totaling 25 persons.

Research findings

1. Factors Affecting Customer Loyalty

The results of the model analysis represented the influence of latent variables which directly and indirectly affected customer loyalty. The researcher therefore applied the results of the structural equation analysis to present the direct and indirect influence values and the sum of all latent variables to show the influence of various factors that affected customer loyalty as shown in Table 1 and Figure 1.

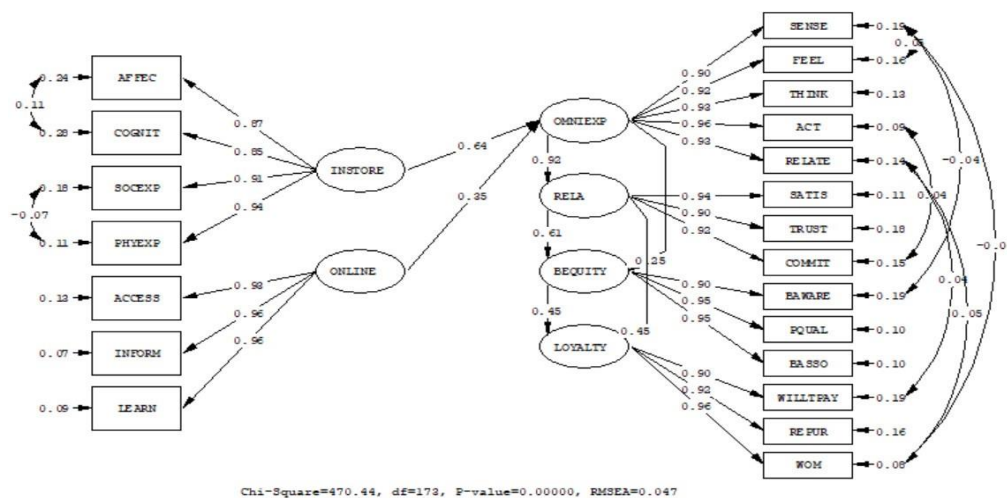


Figure 1 Structural equation model after the model improvement

Table 1 Direct, indirect, and total studied influences

Influence of variables	Causal relationship		
	Direct	Indirect	Total
In-store perception of experiences	-	0.49	0.49
Perception of online experiences	-	0.27	0.27
Perception of experiences from Omni Channel Marketing	-	0.78	0.78
Relationship quality	0.45	0.51	0.96
Brand value	0.45	-	0.45

From Table 1, it was found that the relationship quality had the total influence on customer loyalty the most, followed by the perception of experiences from Omni Channel Marketing, in-store perception of experiences, brand value, and perception of online experiences, respectively. However, when considering only the factors directly affecting customer loyalty, it was found that the relationship quality and brand value had the same direct influence on customer loyalty. Meanwhile, the perception of experiences from Omni Channel Marketing, in-store perception of experiences, and perception of online experiences indirectly influenced the customer loyalty.

2. Omni Channel Marketing model of AIS Telewiz

Marketing to build customer loyalty is the most important for AIS Telewiz in the current situation

- 1) For the Digital Service strategy that AIS Telewiz uses, even though the technology is mainly used, looking deeper, it can be seen that the key elements that extend into various services that meets the needs and meets the core are from the insight and the needs of customers completely. This will perfectly strengthen AIS Telewiz's leadership in the telecommunication market. It also reflects the use of service mind in designing creative services with digital technology and new innovations.

In addition, AIS Telewiz also communicates details of digital marketing through advertisements that represent an understanding of customer needs for those who like speed, convenience and manage everything by themselves. These can be done through creative services with digital technology that is available 24 hours a day reinforcing the leadership in real customer care.

- 2) Omni Channel Marketing seamlessly connects customer data from all channels because AIS Telewiz has a variety of service channels, both online and offline, such as 138 branches of AIS Shops, 430 branches of Telewiz, AIS Call Center, Facebook and Line @ AIS Call Center, etc. These allow customers to use the service from all channels continuously as the same channel. AIS then links information from all channels that customers use the service to be the same channel with the Omni-Channel concept. For example, when a customer visits the AIS Telewiz website to view the information about the package that they are interested in at that time, even if they have not decided, the customer interest information will be recorded and linked to all service channels making it possible for customers to use the service through any channel. The employees will be able to offer products and services that customers are interested in at that moment so that the customers do not have to repeat their needs.

AIS Telewiz's problem-solving approach in creating Omni Channel Marketing

Creating the Omni Channel Marketing effectively requires the collaboration at every step from managing customer data until reaching the channel to reach customers at the destination. The collaboration is focused to achieve convergence or harmonious efficiency instead of encouraging competition for each store.

The focus of Omni Channel Marketing is not on products, channels, etc., but on reaching individual customers. Reaching individual customers requires the understanding of such customers and the understanding of the customers which must be able to be identified.



Figure 2 Omni Channel Marketing model of AIS Telewiz

The customers can choose to view products through various devices of AIS Telewiz whether online channels such as Line, applications, websites. When the customers fill out the list on the website or LINE, the customers will receive the coupon from AIS Telewiz. Then, AIS Telewiz will communicate back by sending SMS, email, LINE to find customers to use the coupon at the actual shop or view products from the shop to consider the product or product features of interest. Even if the customers do not immediately buy at that time, all customer information will be saved. The next time the customer use the service via any channel, the employees are able to offer products and services immediately and the customer does not have to say or repeat the information.

2) When customers consider products from various online channels, customers can come to see the real products at the AIS Telewiz store to make the decision again and can buy products at the shop. Otherwise, the customers can return to reconsider and can order products online via AIS Telewiz provided with special discounts for customers.

3) In the event that the AIS Telewiz shop does not have the products ordered by the customer in the warehouse, the system will connect to the central AIS and will bring the products of the central warehouse to sell to customers in order to satisfy customer.

4) When customers order products online from AIS Telewiz, the customers can choose which store to pick up their products at or have them delivered to the customer's houses.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The arrival of digital technology and digital disruption including the situation of the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has affected consumers' lifestyles and changes in purchasing behaviors. The product retail sales marketing in the previous form may still not be able to respond to consumers deeply. Therefore, the Omni Channel Marketing or sometimes called seamless channel occurs with the advent of digital technology. The marketing to sell products were once usable such as selling through storefront only or online sales or even using multiple channels to approach customers including Social Media, Website, Email and storefronts. This marketing method was called multi-channel marketing. Each channel has separate sales model without information sharing or collaboration. As a result, the inaccurate information can cause confusion among customers and may still not be able to respond to consumers deeply. Thus, the concept of Omni Channel Marketing was created to communicate with customers through various channels. Connecting channels, integrating, or merging into one can be done by combining those communication channels both online and offline to create good experiences for customers intelligently and seamlessly. This is the customer relationship management (CRM) system in the current situation.

The Omni Channel Marketing and Multi-Channel Marketing are different. The multi-channel marketing is a marketing that has more than one channel to present goods and services to increase the ability to reach more consumers. However, the multi-channel service as mentioned above is the channel to provide information services without database connection. The example scenario of multi-

channel store is that Khun Daeng goes to ABC store's website to browse products. When she finds the item she wants, she writes it down and opts to drive herself to the ABC store to buy it. However, she cannot find the item she is looking for in ABC store. When she asks, the staff replies that it is out of stock. So, Khun Daeng has to go home without buying the item. This creates dissatisfaction with customers and ABC stores lose the opportunity to sell. It can be seen that multi-channel marketing actually increases channels for consumers to see more products. However, there are weaknesses and gaps that can spoil the chance to sell because it does not focus on the consumer experiences.

The Omni Channel Marketing is to reach consumers through the "integration" of all channels of business whether offline or online to create seamless experience in shopping for target consumers. It is customer-centric marketing. The Omni Channel Marketing that AIS Telewiz focuses on is the ability to continuously meet the needs of customers in all channels. For example, customers can access to buy packages that are interested of AIS Telewiz through various devices. Even if customers do not immediately buy at that time, all customer information will be saved. The next time they use the service via any channel, the employees are able to offer products and services immediately. The customers do not have to say or repeat information. The example scenario of Omni Channel Marketing store is when Khun Kheaw enters the AIS Telewiz store website to browse the products. When she finds the product she wants, then she clicks to view it. She knows that this product is available at an AIS Telewiz store near her house. Thus, she decides to press the wish list button and drives herself to the store to buy the product. The staff knowing the list of product she wants through the system will be able to direct the customer to that shelf immediately. Khun Kheaw decides to buy the product and drives home satisfied with the experience.

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