

THE IMPACT OF INNOVATION ON BRAND LOYALTY THROUGH CUSTOMER SATISFACTION OF HOTEL BUSINESS IN NAKHON PHANOM PROVINCE.

Supak Ontajan *, Watcharapong Intarawong **

* Graduate Student of Kasetsart University, Thailand
E-mail address: su-pak-7@hotmail.com

** Department of Management, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Management Science, Kasetsart University, Thailand
E-mail address: gai23@ymail.com

ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were to; 1) to study the innovation, the customer satisfaction, and brand loyalty of hotel business in Nakhon Phanom province 2) to compare the different of customer opinion toward types of innovation, customer satisfaction, and brand loyalty when classified by personal factors 3) to study the influence of innovation on brand loyalty through customer satisfaction.

This research is a survey research. The population used in this research is tourists who travel and stay in hotels in Nakhon Phanom Province, which does not know the exact number. Use the method to set the sample size by the formula of Cochran [1], it was 400 samples. Use proportional sampling and simple random sampling methods. Tools used to collect data is a questionnaire; Section 1: Questionnaire about innovation consists of 2 aspects, which are 1) product innovation 2) process innovation is a questionnaire developed by the researcher based on the conceptual framework of OECD [2], Edison, Ali and Torkar [3] which is a 5 levels rating scale, Section 2: The customer satisfaction questionnaire consists of 2 aspects which are 1) product quality 2) service quality is a questionnaire developed by the researcher according to Nuridin [4] conceptual framework, Section 3: Questionnaire about brand loyalty is a questionnaire developed by the researcher based on the conceptual framework of Gomez, Arranz & Cillan [5], which consists of 5 rating scales also. Reliability testing was used the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient method; .801 of innovation, .924 of customer service, and .884 of brand loyalty. The analysis of general information about respondents, business data, levels of innovation, customer satisfaction, brand loyalty were analyzed by descriptive statistics; frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Hypothesis testing was used t-test, F-test (One Way ANOVA), Pearson correlation coefficient, simple regression, and multiple regressions.

The research results found that; the level of innovation, customer satisfaction, and brand loyalty was high by mean at 4.12, 4.17, and 4.34 respectively. The hypothesis testing found that; occupation was the only personal factor that could effect on the different of opinion toward innovation and brand loyalty. The Model 1: Innovation can predict the customer satisfaction by 52.8 percent ($R^2 = .528$), and the standardized coefficients (β) was .762. The Model 2: Customer satisfaction can predict the brand loyalty by 68.9 percent ($R^2 = .689$), and the standardized coefficients (β) was .830. The Model 3: Innovation and customer satisfaction can predict the brand loyalty by 70.1 percent ($R^2 = .701$), and the standardized coefficients (β) was .161, and .713 respectively. The empirical evidence from the research results reveals that; the innovation had a positive impact on brand loyalty through customer satisfaction.

Keywords: Innovation, Customer Satisfaction, Brand Loyalty

INTRODUCTION

Background

Nakhon Phanom is the important province in the northeastern of Thailand. At present, Nakhon Phanom province is a special economic development zone, and a tourism center for the Mekong Basin civilization, due to the diverse historical and cultural tourist. Nakhon Phanom Province has also been announced that is the happiest city in Thailand. From this reason, the hotel business in Nakhon Phanom province has continuously grown and expanded. The hotel business in Nakhon Phanom also composed of the old hotel business and the newly hotel business for customers or tourists to choose. The service of hotel business was included; room service, conferences hall, seminars room, or restaurant. According to the 2017 Industrial Census, it was found that there are 197 hotel establishments in Nakhon Phanom; mainly operation in accommodation services, business contacts, meetings or seminars, visiting relatives, and fitness was 139 hotels or 70.6 percent, while 58 hotels or 29.4 percent are provided non-tourist accommodations. Due to this situation, it is impact on the competition in hotel business. The entrepreneur must bring new innovations to use in the business as much as possible. Many hotel business executives have decided to use innovations in their process operations in order to create more value in the brand and service in terms of the ability to compete in the hotel business.

Choosri [6] said that applying service innovation to the hotel business is the creation of a modern hotel service process, or creating diversity and convenience provided through service which have to pick up the technology or change the process steps continue to increase the value of the new hotel business. And the hotel potential in terms of quality the service has changed in a good direction. In addition, Dominici, Rosa, Guzzo [7] in order to be successful in the market it is not sufficient to attract new customers managers must concentrate on retaining existing customers implementing effective policies of customer satisfaction and loyalty. In hotel industry customer satisfaction is largely hooked upon quality of service. A management approach focused on customer satisfaction can improve customer loyalty, thus increasing the positive image of the touristic destination. Hence, exploring the importance for customers of hotel attributes in hotel selection is indispensable. Ankur [8] customer loyalty: happy customers are loyal customers. Not only is it important for you to provide stellar service, but awesome products as well. Make it a point to be on the fast track for keeping up with trends that your customers may follow such as building personal assistance services for traveling customers or making special concessions for avid repeat consumers. Be sure you have items on hand so when your customer needs you and your products, everything's available. A customer who has to continuously wait for you to do your part may grow tired, no matter how loyal, and venture off to your competition. Keep customers loyal by focusing on them at all times.

From the situation and importance mentioned above, there is the origin of 'The Impact of Innovation on Brand Loyalty through Customer Satisfaction of Hotel Business in Nakhon Phanom Province'. The results of the research will be used to benefit the hotel business development, when customers are impressed or satisfied, they will have words of mouth behavior, and come back to use the products and services again. This will also enable them to generate a lot of revenue, as well as creating the competitiveness of the hotel business, both at the provincial level and at the regional level.

Objectives

The objectives of this research were to; 1) to study the innovation, the customer satisfaction, and brand loyalty of hotel business in Nakhon Phanom province 2) to compare the different of customer opinion toward types of innovation, customer satisfaction, and

brand loyalty when classified by personal factors 3) to study the influence of innovation on brand loyalty through customer satisfaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Documentation for research on the impact of innovation on brand loyalty through customer satisfaction of hotel businesses in Nakhon Phanom Province by using the conceptual framework of theoretical research and reviewing relevant literature to determining the variable and create research tools as follows;

Innovation

Azis [9] the importance of innovation in current business justifies the increasing interest that researchers are taking in it. There are three mainstreams innovation typologies approach dominant: incremental versus radical innovation; technological versus marketing innovation; and product versus process innovation. The literature research in innovation measurement can be divided into two mainstream of innovation measurement; Input and output measurement; Metric and methodologies measurement. An innovation is also defined by the Oslo manual OECD [2] as a product, process, marketing method or organizational method that is new (or significantly improved) to the firm, including products, processes and methods that firms are the first to develop and those that have been adopted from other firms or organizations. The Oslo Manual for measuring innovation defines four types of innovation: product innovation, process innovation, marketing innovation and organizational innovation. 1) Product innovation: A good or service that is new or significantly improved. This includes significant improvements in technical specifications, components and materials, software in the product, user friendliness or other functional characteristics. 2) Process innovation: A new or significantly improved production or delivery method. This includes significant changes in techniques, equipment and/or software. 3) Marketing innovation: A new marketing method involving significant changes in product design or packaging, product placement, product promotion or pricing. 4) Organizational innovation: A new organizational method in business practices, workplace organization or external relations. Gunday and Ulusoy [10] Innovation is broadly seen as an essential component of competitiveness, embedded in the organizational structures, processes, products and services within a firm. Polder et al. [11] believe that an organizational innovation is defined as introducing new business practices, organizing methods, decision making systems and new approaches to manage external relations. This research adapted the study of innovation from the conceptual framework of OECD [2] and Edison, Ali and Torkar [3], by defining the scope of innovation in 2 areas which are product innovation and process innovation.

Customer Satisfaction

From the literature review in this research, the researcher has compiled the concept that the researchers wrote the meaning of satisfaction as follows; Lin, Chen and Chiu [12] gave meaning to satisfaction, meaning something that happens from a person's perception. In which each person is satisfied or happy by comparing the performance of products that are relevant to the expectations of that person. Tanford, Montgomery and Nelson [13] satisfaction referring to the emotions of consumers can be realized after using the service. According to English business dictionary [14] customer satisfaction is the degree of satisfaction provided by the goods or services of a company as measured by the number of repeat customers. Although customer satisfaction is a new thing, researchers defined customer satisfaction under different angles and different time. While the literature contains significant differences in the definition of customer satisfaction, all the definitions share some

common elements. When examined as a whole, three general components can be identified: 1) consumer satisfaction is a response (emotional or cognitive), 2) the response pertains to a particular focus (expectations, product, consume experience), 3) the response occurs at a particular time (after consumption, after choice, based on accumulated experience). Nuridin [4] quality of service and product quality is a determinant factor of customer satisfaction because the service and good product quality will create customer satisfaction. Basically, the purpose of a company is to create a satisfied customer. The creation of customer satisfaction can provide several benefits such as the influence between the company and the customer to be harmonious, providing a good foundation for repeat purchase and the creation of customer loyalty, and forming a mouth-to-mouth recommendation that is profitable for the company. This research applied the customer satisfaction research framework from the concept of Nuridin [4]; consisting of product quality satisfaction and service quality satisfaction.

Brand Loyalty

Brand Loyalty means that consumers have a good attitude towards a brand, whether it is due to the confidence, thinking and or the consumer's mind and repeated purchases. At present, there is a variety of brands, combined with the use of many marketing strategies to attract consumers to change for new brands, which means the brand loyalty has been researched by many researchers. From the literature review in this research, the researcher has compiled the concepts that the researchers wrote about the meaning and the importance of brand loyalty as follows; Schiffman and Kanuk [15] brand loyalty means customer's consistent satisfaction to the product, one of the most important things about brand loyalty is that when customers are loyal to the brand, they will gain a stable and increasing market share and may become intangible assets that reflect the price of company products. Aaker [16] Brand loyalty means the behavior of consumers who have a good attitude towards the product, which leads to buying behavior, and if satisfied with the use of that product, it will lead to repeat buying behavior. Kim, Morris and Swait [17] found that true brand loyalty is due to 5 factors which are; 1) Brand Credibility 2) Affective Brand Conviction 3) Cognitive Brand Conviction 4) Attitude Strength 5) Brand Commitment. Therefore, brand loyalty in terms of behavior can be considered from continuous buying behavior. The buying behavior is a result of consumers having a good attitude towards the brand. From the concept of loyalty in the products summarized above, it can be concluded that brand loyalty is the consumer's attachment to that brand, which is a consistent attitude, and should be expressed by continuously buying products in the same brand which can be measured by the quantity purchased and the frequency of that purchase.

In addition, this research is focused on word of mouth. Online word-of-mouth communication is a message from consumers that has both positive and negative content on products and services, and the company. In the age of the internet, consumers can communicate more conveniently and quickly, eWord of mouth communication when done over the internet, via any device such as; notebooks, or mobile phones became viral communication. The word of mouth can be done via the internet in many ways such as IM (Instant Message), Homepage, Product Review Site, Chat Room, and Social Network such as; facebook, Instagram, which gives consumers the freedom to search for information about products and services, both from those who have previously used the product, both as well as from known and unknown people Goldsmith [18]; Cheung et al. [19]. This research establishes brand loyalty referring to customers doing consistently in; 1) repeated buying behavior means a situation where customers buy a product or receive a service until they are happy and impressed and then come back to buy the product or receive service again. 2) Viral

behavior through the internet means the act of disseminating information received via social media caused by the feelings of a person may publish positive or negative.

The Link between Innovation, Customer Service, and Brand Loyalty

Naveed, Tahir and Akhtar, Irum and Cheema, Khaliq Ur Rehman [20]: The Impact of Innovation on Customer Satisfaction and Brand loyalty: A Study of the Students of Faisalabad. The results described the significant relationship between the independent variable (innovation) and independent variables (customer satisfaction and brand loyalty). These results described that innovative product caused the customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. Daragahi [21] the Impact of Innovation on Customer Satisfaction: A Study of the Cosmetics Producer in Tehran, this study was intended to investigate the effect of innovation of customer satisfaction (the quality of product, satisfaction with sales, satisfaction with after-sales services, and the brand of product). The results of analyses are as follows: innovation has an effect on customer satisfaction. Therefore, innovation (open or closed) has a direct and positive relationship with customer satisfaction (the quality of product, satisfaction with sales, satisfaction with after-sales services, and the brand of product). In other words, more innovations improve customer satisfaction. Ayodele, OGinni, Oluwayemi [22] Effect of product innovation on customer satisfaction: AN overview of insight into Nigerian service market; the objective of this study was to gain an insight into service innovation dimensions that affect customer’s satisfaction in the service industry. Some service innovation dimensions were selected to be tested in First Registrars operations and its relationship with customers in order to explore the relationship between service innovation and customer satisfaction.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

From reviewing relevant literature, the research framework can be created as follows:

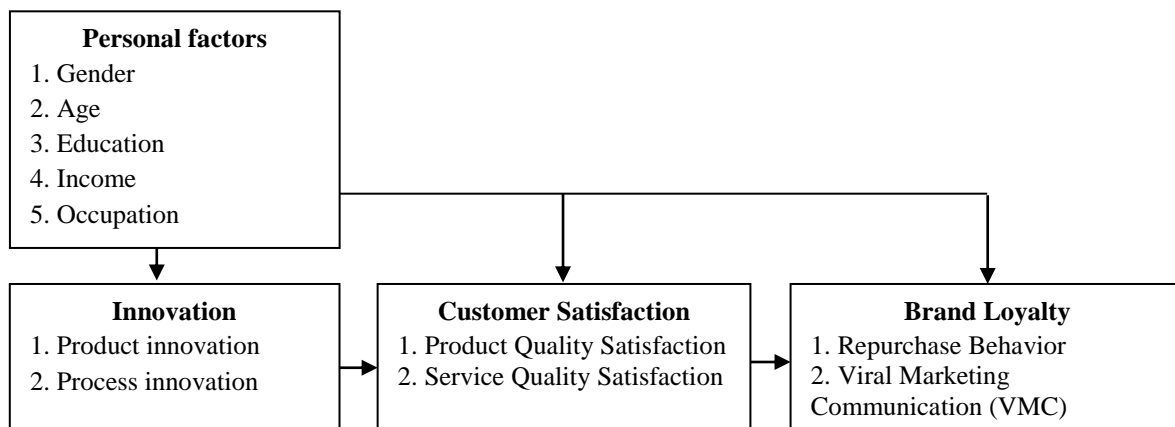


Fig. 1 - A conceptual model of research

The research hypotheses are as follows.

H₁: The innovation, customer satisfaction, and brand loyalty of hotel business in Nakhon Phanom Province are different when classified by personal factors.

H₂: The innovation has positive influence on brand loyalty thought customer satisfaction.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The impact of innovation on brand loyalty through customer satisfaction of hotel businesses in Nakhon Phanom Province is a survey research, the research methodology is consists of; 1) Population and samples: The population used in this research is tourists who travel and stay in hotels in Nakhon Phanom Province, which does not know the exact number. Due to not being able to know the exact value of the population, therefore the researcher uses a method to determine the sample size, by using the formula to calculate of Cochran [1]. Determine the proportion of the sample that is interested in studying at the 95% of confidence level and accept the tolerance from the sampling 5% or 0.05. Sample size is calculated as 385 people and to prevent mistakes from incomplete questionnaires, the researcher was collected data from a sample of 400 people. Use proportional sampling and simple random sampling methods. 2) Research instruments: Tools used to collect data is a questionnaire; Section 1: Questionnaire about innovation consists of 2 aspects, which are 1) product innovation 2) process innovation is a questionnaire developed by the researcher based on the conceptual framework of OECD [2], Edison, Ali and Torkar [3] which is a 5 levels rating scale, Section 2: The customer satisfaction questionnaire consists of 2 aspects which are 1) product quality 2) service quality is a questionnaire developed by the researcher according to Khadka and Maharjan [23] conceptual framework, Section 3: Questionnaire about brand loyalty is a questionnaire developed by the researcher based on the conceptual framework of Gomez, Arranz and Cillan [5], which consists of 5 rating scales also. Reliability testing was used the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient method; .801 of innovation, .924 of customer service, and .884 of brand loyalty. 3) Data analysis methods; the analysis of general information about respondents, business data, levels of innovation, customer satisfaction, brand loyalty were analyzed by descriptive statistics; frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Hypothesis testing was used t-test, F-test (One Way ANOVA), Pearson correlation coefficient, simple regression, and multiple regressions.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Respondents were male 45.3%, female, 54.8%, age group between 20-30 years 46.0%, diploma equivalent to 37.0%, bachelor's degree or higher 38.8%, the income/month 10,000-20,000 baht was highest number 41.0%, government officials 32.0%, business owner or businesses employee 38.3%, students 22.8%. The level of innovation was high by mean at $\bar{x} = 4.07$, while customer satisfaction, and brand loyalty of business hotel in Nakhon Phanom province was highest by mean was at $\bar{x} = 4.32$, and $\bar{x} = 4.36$ respectively.

The hypothesis testing results were as follows;

H₁: The innovation, customer satisfaction, and brand loyalty of hotel business in Nakhon Phanom Province are different when classified by personal factors. The researchers were used t-test, and F-test (one-way ANOVA) to prove the hypothesis. The results of the hypothesis test 1 show that only personal factor in the aspect of occupation was different in opinions on innovation and brand loyalty with statistical significance at the level of 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that some parts of hypothesis 1 are accepted. The details are shown in the table. 1

Table 1 – The different of innovation, customer satisfaction, and brand loyalty of hotel business in Nakhon Phanom Province when classified by personal factors

Personal Factor (Occupation)	Innovation			
	□	S.D.	F	Sig
1. Government official	4.19	.42	5.759	.001**
2. business owner or businesses employee	4.06	.44		
3. Agriculturist	3.93	.48		
4. Student	3.96	.52		
Personal Factor (Occupation)	Brand Loyalty			
	□	S.D.	F	Sig
1. Government official	4.44	.43	2.827	.038*
2. business owner or businesses employee	4.37	.44		
3. Agriculturist	4.24	.49		
4. Student	4.29	.44		

For the hypothesis test 2; the hypotheses were used regression analysis; hence the symbols used to analyze in this research were as follows; INOV: Innovation, CSAT: Customer Satisfaction, BLOY: Brand Loyalty. In order to check the relationship between the groups of independent variables, the statistics of Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used.

Table 2 - Correlation analysis between variables.

	INOV	CSAT	BLOY
INOV	1		
CSAT	.726**	1	
BLOY	.679**	.830**	1

To check the problem of multicollinearity, Hair et al. [24] described the relationship between the independent variables must be less than 0.80, which is more than 0.80 may cause of multicollinearity. This research found the relationship between the independent variables; the highest value was 0.726, it was not exceed 0.80. Multicollinearity problem was not found; therefore, it could be tested by using regression analysis to the next.

H₂: The innovation has positive influence on brand loyalty thought customer satisfaction.

The researcher has defined the equation for the regression analysis as follows.

$$CSAT = \beta_1 INOV \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

$$BLOY = \beta_2 CSAT \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

$$BLOY = \beta_3 INOV \dots\dots\dots (3)$$

$$BLOY = \beta_4 INOV + \beta_5 CSAT \dots\dots\dots (4)$$

The research results were as below;

$$CSAT = .726 INOV \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

(5.592)

$$BLOY = .830 CSAT \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

(7.827)

$$BLOY = .679 INOV \dots\dots\dots (3)$$

(4.895)

$$BLOY = .161 INOV + .713 CSAT \dots\dots\dots (4)$$

(1.052) (4.660)

The research result can be expressed in terms of the path of influence as follows:

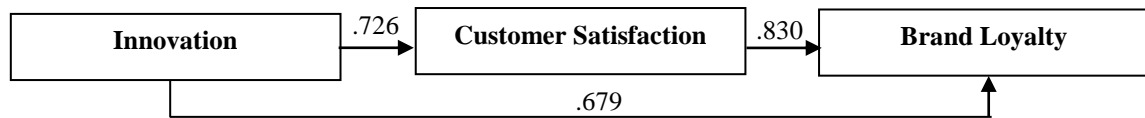


Fig. 2 - A research result

The Model 1: Innovation can predict the customer satisfaction by 52.8 percent ($R^2 = .528$), and the standardized coefficients (β) was .762. The Model 2: Customer satisfaction can predict the brand loyalty by 68.9 percent ($R^2 = .689$), and the standardized coefficients (β) was .830. The Model 3: Innovation can predict the brand loyalty by 46.1 percent ($R^2 = .461$), and the standardized coefficients (β) was .679. The Model 4: Innovation and customer satisfaction can predict the brand loyalty by 70.1 percent ($R^2 = .701$), and the standardized coefficients (β) was .161, and .713 respectively. The empirical evidence from the research results reveals that; the innovation had a positive impact on brand loyalty through customer satisfaction. Therefore, it can be concluded that the second hypothesis is accepted.

CONCLUSIONS

From the findings of the research reveals that innovation has a positive impact on brand loyalty through customer satisfaction, which is consistent with the research of Naveed, Tahir and Akhtar, Irum and Cheema, Khaliq Ur Rehman [20], Daragahi [21], Ayodele, OGinni, Oluwayemi [22]. Which is a confirmation that in the hotel business the owners or executives need to accelerate innovation, whether product innovation or process innovation. This is because both innovations have a profound effect on the satisfaction of the customers who use the hotel services. Policy suggestions for use as a guideline in the development of hotel business in Nakhon Phanom province on innovation, and allow the customers get more satisfied and greater brand loyalty as follows; 1) Innovation: When classifying each customer, it is found that the customers think that the product innovation of the hotel business is higher than the process innovation. Therefore, the management must accelerate the development of important issues consisted of; applying new technology to improve services for customers, the development of the service system is not complicated and there are staffs to give explanations when customers have questions every time, developing various types of services for customers to choose according to their needs. 2) Customer satisfaction: Customers are less satisfied with product quality than service quality. Therefore, management should pay attention to the hotel provides accurate and clear information about safety equipment such as in-room safes, digital key system; furthermore, there should be increase in signs for different locations and service point. 3) Brand loyalty: Found that the customers have the behavior to tell good stories of this hotel via social media and recommend other people to stay at this hotel via social media also. Therefore, hotels should accelerate the expansion of wifi service areas within the hotel.

For the future research, because this research has been scoped to just only one province, therefore, in the next research, research areas should be expanded to cover more provinces, for the generalization of the findings. In addition, qualitative research should be used in order to gain in-depth information about customer opinions on the hotel business on other issues that may be useful more than the conceptual framework of this research

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