

# 15 YEARS OF “AFTER YOU DESSERT CAFÉ”, WHAT MAKES CUSTOMERS REPURCHASE: A QUANTITATIVE APPROACH

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## ABSTRACT

“After You”, a café that provides various desserts and beverages, has been in business since 2007, and recently become a public company. Thus, it is interesting to investigate personal factors, brand equity, and service marketing mix factors that influence customers repurchase decision. Questionnaires were used as the research instruments and passed the reliability test with coefficient above .80. Convenience sampling was employed, and the total sample size was 387 respondents who bought desserts and beverages from “After You”. To analyze the data, frequency, percentages, averages, and standard deviations, analysis of variance, and multiple regression were utilized.

The study found that 1) personal factors including income influenced repurchase decision, 2) brand equity, including brand awareness and perceived quality of brand influenced the repurchase decision, and 3) service marketing factors, including personnel, promotion, service process, and price influenced repurchase decision with statistical significance at 0.05. Due to the image, quality of products, and services provided by After You, customers find the products of this dessert café worth paying. In addition, the marketing mix that focuses on employee service, service process, and physical environment that are more outstanding than other competitors lead “After You” to run the business more efficiently.

**Keywords:** Brand Equity, Service Marketing Mix, Decision to Repurchase

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## **Introduction**

Dessert café is a business that provides similar services to restaurants. The main products available in the café are various types of desserts, such as toasts, cakes, tarts, pies, and cakes that are popular among customers today (Jenchangkol, 2015) with 10,172.3-million-baht market value. “After You”, a market leader, has continued to expand its branches. Currently, there are hundreds of thousands of members in the system. The average payment of each customer who comes to café is 140-170 baht/person (Naiwaen Investment, 2018).

“After You” was founded by Kulphat Kanokwatanawan and Maetap T. Suwan, whose business was born out of a passion for baking. They opened their first branch in Thonglor. The highlight of this cafe is the wide selection of ingredients and a variety of Japanese style shaved ice. After You is so popular that customers have to wait in line for hours every day. It became a new trend among pastry shops and bakeries in Thailand market (Phong-ngoy, 2016). After You's reputation spread quickly thanks to the variety of delicious desserts and drinks that attract customers to visit the café. The atmosphere of the store has a very pleasant effect on customers due to its modern appearance and warm colors. With 74 stores, it is easy for consumers to find and enjoy the colorful and beautiful desserts of this cafe. The most famous desserts of After You are Bingsu and Honey Toast. This café not only offers affordable products but also promotions to attract customers (Tritipwittayakorn, 2018).

Based on the trend described above, it is important to study the factors that influence consumers' decision to repurchase desserts and beverages at After You in Pathum Thani. The result of this study would help entrepreneurs to understand the reasons why consumers visit After You. In addition, the result can be used as a guideline to develop strategies and improve marketing strategies to become more competitive. New entrepreneurs can also use the results of the study to plan their business investments.

## **Research Objectives**

1. To study personal factors that affect consumers' decision to repurchase desserts and beverages at After You café in Pathum Thani.
2. To study the brand equity that affects consumers' decision to repurchase desserts and beverages at After You café in Pathum Thani.
3. To study service marketing mix factors that affects consumers' decision to repurchase desserts and beverages at After You café in Pathum Thani.

## **Research Hypothesis**

1. Personal factors affect the decision to repurchase desserts and beverages at After You café in Pathum Thani.

2. Brand equity affects the decision to repurchase desserts and beverages at After You café in Pathum Thani.

3. Service marketing mix factors affect the decision to repurchase desserts and beverages at After You café in Pathum Thani.

### Conceptual Framework

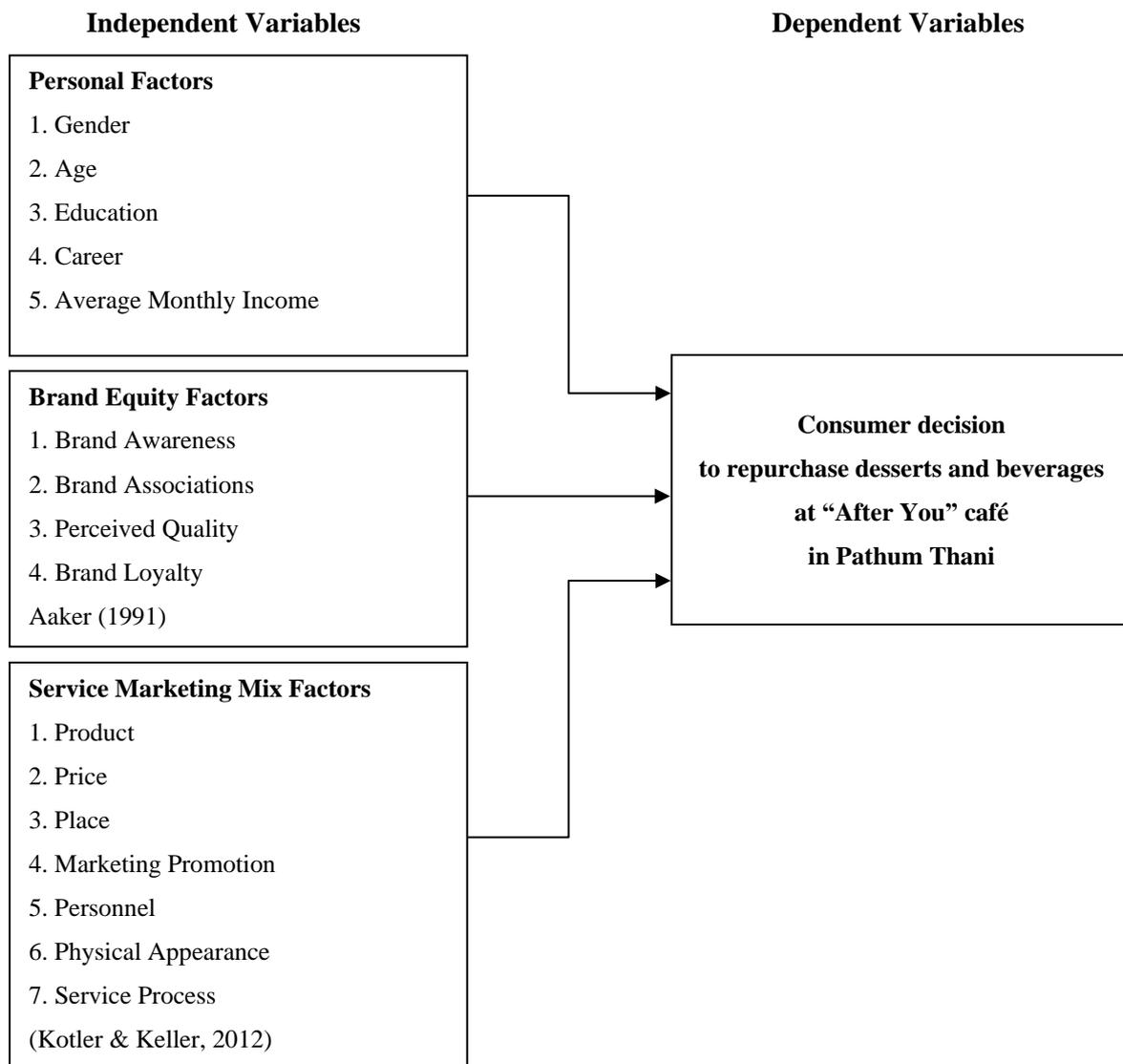


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

### Literature Review

**Brand Equity.** Brand equity was first introduced in the 1980s by the marketers who focused on advertising and public relations. Aaker (1991) conducted a study on this issue and found that brand equity is the relationship between consumer's behavior and the brand. It helps increase brand recognition in terms of reputation to gain an advantage over competitors in the market. Brand equity

consists of brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, brand loyalty and other proprietary assets (Fayrene & Lee, 2011).

**Service Marketing Mix factors.** Service Marketing Mix, developed from traditional marketing mix, consists of 7 elements: 1) products, which refers to what a company offers to consumers, 2) price, which refers to the value that consumers have to pay in order to receive goods and services, 3) place, which refers to a distribution channel and/or a place that is used to move goods and services to the target market, and 4) promotion, which refers to marketing communication to disseminate news or advertisements to encourage purchase (Kotler & Keller, 2012), 5) people, which refers to the personnel with a duty to satisfy customers, 6) physical environment, which refers to is equipment and various facilities the company provides to customers, and 7) process, which refers to the step towards effective marketing operations to facilitate customers (Samerjai, 2008).

**Repurchase Decisions.** Repurchase is the intended re- purchase of goods and services from the same seller (Singsom, 2012). It can be divided into four types. First, repurchase willingness: consumers are willing to repurchase when they have the opportunity. Second, repurchase opportunity: consumers tend to buy the product again and again in the future. Third, higher purchase volume: repeat buyers' behavior depends on the original seller. Finally, buying the same type of product from the same seller (Panthura, 2013). This is consistent with other empirical concepts. According to Hansemark and Albinson (2004), repurchase is determined by satisfaction with the service provider. In addition, Kim and Stoel (2004) found that customers will only repurchase the same product if they are happy and satisfied with the experience of consuming that product.

## **Research Methodology**

1. The population in this study were consumers at After You, Future Park Rangsit branch, Pathum Thani. Since the exact number was unknown, the sample size was determined based on the Cochran (1977) formula to obtain a sample size of 384. To prevent discrepancies in data collection, the data were collected from 400 respondents by using purposive sampling to select consumers visiting After You café. After collecting the data, there were 387 complete questionnaires, which was sufficient for statistical estimation.

2. The instrument was a questionnaire developed from relevant concepts and theories. It consists of four parts: 1) general information about respondents, 2) brand equity factors, 3) level of service marketing mix factors, and 4) repeat purchase decisions. A 5-level rating scale was used. The data was interpreted in interval scale. The Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) was greater than .6. For Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha value, the sample size for pre-tests of questionnaire were 30 people with similar characteristics of the sample group. The reliability value was .80 in all aspects (Vanichbuncha & Vanichbuncha, 2021).

3. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to analyze general characteristics of the samples. To test the hypothesis, inferential statistic, such

as t-test, One-Way ANOVA, and Multiple Linear Regression Analysis (MRA) were used. The statistical significance was set at the .05 level.

## Results

1. The results show that most of the consumers were female (51.9%), aged between 26-30 years (29.7%), holding an undergraduate degree (60.2%), civil servants (22%), and had an average monthly income between 15,001-20,000 baht (28.2%)

2. In regards to brand equity, brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty were at a high level ( $\bar{X} = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ). It was found that the aspect of brand awareness ( $\bar{X} = 3.96$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ), and perceived quality had highest average ( $\bar{X} = 3.96$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ), followed by brand loyalty ( $\bar{X} = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ). However, brand associations had the lowest average ( $\bar{X} = 3.93$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ).

3. the results of the study on service marketing mix factors show that the overall level was at high level ( $\bar{X} = 4.01$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ ) 1) Product 2) Price 3) Place 4) Marketing Promotion 5) Personnel 6) Physical Appearance and 7) Service Process

However, physical appearance had the highest average ( $\bar{X} = 4.10$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ), followed by service process ( $\bar{X} = 4.07$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ), personnel ( $\bar{X} = 4.05$ ,  $SD = 0.77$ ), product ( $\bar{X} = 3.99$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ), place ( $\bar{X} = 3.99$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ), promotion ( $\bar{X} = 3.97$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ), and price ( $\bar{X} = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ ), respectively.

4. The overall repurchase decision of consumers was found that the average value was at a high level ( $\bar{X} = 3.96$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ). It was found that all items had a high average level, i.e. you like After You and will definitely come back to repurchase in the future ( $\bar{X} = 4.03$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ), and you will come back and repurchase the products even though the price increases according to economic conditions ( $\bar{X} = 3.99$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ), After You is your first choice in terms of desserts and drinks ( $\bar{X} = 3.98$ ,  $SD = 0.80$ ), you like and will be a regular customer of After You ( $\bar{X} = 3.93$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ), and repurchasing at After You in the future is a good decision for you ( $\bar{X} = 3.91$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ), respectively.

## Hypothesis Test Results

**Table 1** Results of hypothesis test on personal factors affecting repurchase decisions

Personal Factors	Statistics	Values	Sig.
1. Gender	t-test	-4.472	.927
2. Age	F-test	0.859	.508
3. Education	F-test	1.704	.148
4. Career	F-test	1.387	.228
5. Average Monthly Income	F-test	<b>2.909*</b>	<b>.014</b>

\*Statistically significant at .05

Table 1 presents that average monthly income had an impact on consumers' decision to repurchase desserts and beverages at “After You” café in Pathum Thani Province with statistical significance at the .05.

**Table 2** Results of hypothesis test on brand equity factors affecting repurchase decision

<b>Repurchase Decisions</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>β</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Constants	0.850	0.158		5.392*	<b>.000</b>
1. Brand Awareness	0.385	0.077	0.371	4.974*	<b>.000</b>
2. Brand Associations	0.168	0.066	0.170	2.570*	<b>.011</b>
3. Perceived Quality	0.102	0.074	0.099	1.372	.171
4. Brand Loyalty	0.133	0.077	0.128	1.735	.083

R = .717, R<sup>2</sup> = .515, Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .509, SE<sub>Est</sub> = 0.440, F = 101.234, p = .000\*

\*Statistically significant at .05

Table 2 presents that brand awareness (b = 0.385, t = 4.974, Sig. = .000) and Brand Associations (b = .168, t = 2.570), Sig. = .011) respectively affected consumers' decision to repurchase desserts and beverages at “After You” café in Pathum Thani, respectively. Both variables can explain the variation of repurchase decision at 50.9 (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.509), with a statistically significant level of .05.

**Table 3** Results of hypothesis test on marketing mix factors affecting repurchase decisions

<b>Repurchase Decisions</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>β</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Constants	0.351	0.152		2.311	<b>.021</b>
1. Product	-0.036	0.071	-0.034	-.503	.615
2. Price	0.191	0.064	0.178	2.964*	<b>.004</b>
3. Place	0.000	0.078	0.000	-.006	.995
4. Marketing Promotion	0.238	0.072	0.219	3.289*	<b>.001</b>
5. Personnel	0.258	0.066	0.264	3.904*	<b>.000</b>
6. Physical Appearance	0.042	0.081	0.041	0.519	.604
7. Service Process	0.209	0.071	0.205	2.938*	<b>.004</b>

R = .782, R<sup>2</sup> = .612, Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .605, SE<sub>Est</sub> = 0.395, F = 85.353, p = .000\*

\*Statistically significant at .05

Table 3 presents that personnel ( $b = 258, t = 3.904, \text{Sig.} = .000$ ), marketing promotion ( $b = .238, t = 3.289, \text{Sig.} = .001$ ), service process ( $b = .209, t = 2.938, \text{Sig.} = .004$ ) and price ( $b = .191, t = 2.964, \text{Sig.} = .004$ ) respectively affected consumers' decision to repurchase products and services of desserts and beverages at “After You” café in Pathum Thani, respectively. The four variables can explain the variation of repurchase decision at 60.5% ( $\text{Adjusted } R^2 = 0.605$ ), with a statistically significant level of .05.

## Discussion

1. The results of the study show that income has an impact on consumers' decision to repurchase desserts and drinks at After You Café in Pathum Thani Province because consumers have different income levels. Generally, people come to the café to enjoy the dessert while using the café as a work space. Therefore, there are different concepts, attitudes and values in choosing a dessert café. There are groups of consumers with different incomes who are loyal customers of the After You Café. Similarly, Chotthiniphat (2019), who investigated the factors influencing the decision to purchase desserts at After You Café in Pathumwan district, Bangkok, found that income significantly influences the decision to purchase desserts at After You shop in Pathumwan district, Bangkok. This is consistent with the findings of Trangkineenad et al. (2022), who found that income and beverage prices influence consumers' willingness to visit cafés in Bangkok, while prices and popularity of the café among friends and family members, as well as social popularity, influence consumers' willingness to revisit the café.

2. Brand awareness and brand associations significantly affected the decision to repurchase desserts and beverages at After You café in Pathum Thani. Brand awareness had the greatest effect on repurchases since After You café has been well-known among consumers and consumers are more familiar with this brand than others due to the logo of the café. Thus, consumers tend to think of After You café first when they think of dessert café. Brand Associations was found to be the second factor that affected repurchase decisions. Consumers preferred After You due to the taste and quality of its desserts and drinks. Furthermore, the café also pay attention to cleanliness, safety, and quantity. Thus, most consumers revisited the café. Similarly, Lamlertluksanachai and Vannavanit (2018) found that the factors influencing customer value were retention value, product value, and brand value. The results of this study differ from those of Aquinia and Soliha (2020), who found brand association not significantly affects repurchase intention at Starbucks cafés in Semarang, Indonesia, even though the store characteristics were similar to those of After You cafés. Consumer values and views, which may vary from country to country, should also be considered when applying the study results.

3. Personnel, promotion, process, and price significantly affected the decision to repurchase desserts and beverages at After You café in Pathum Thani. It was found that personnel had the most influence on repurchase decisions since consumers who visited the café needed hospitality, clear communication, and service etiquette with respect to customers. Promotion had the influence on repurchase decisions in the second place since consumers preferred finding news on online media. This

channel can persuade them to apply for membership, be apart of other activities to receive special privileges, and buy souvenirs at special events. Process had the influence on repurchase decisions in the third place. Equally services with the same standards and processes led to efficiency in serving all customers. Moreover, price had the influence on repurchase decisions in the last place. Even though consumers compared the value of the product and the price, the clearly specified prices of the products were reasonable with the quality of desserts, the atmosphere in the store, and a variety of products. Thus, consumers accepted the value of the products at the higher level than the prices, which lead to their repurchase decisions. This is consistent with Wongtip, Suwattanadilok and Rojniruttikul (2017), who found that product, price, place, promotion, personnel, process, and physical characteristics affected the decision to visit Bingsu café in Bangkok. Similarly, Thongcot, Aungvaravong and Sajja-areewat (2016) revealed that personnel, place, physical characteristics, price, promotion, products, and process affected the Khon Kaen University students' decision to choose an ice cream shop, respectively.

### **Contribution to Knowledge**

In this study, it was obviously found that personnel, promotion, process, and price respectively influenced customers repurchase desserts and drinks at “After You Café” in Pathum Thani. The popularity of this café reflects the strength of the brand. Consumers recognize that this café is worth visiting and consuming its desserts because of its image and the quality of its products and services. In addition, “After You” stands out from other competitors because of its staff, service processes and physical environment, which allows it to run its business efficiently.

### **Suggestions**

1. Regarding personal factors, income was found to influence consumers' decision to repurchase desserts and beverages at After You Café in Pathum Thani. Therefore, it is important to provide consumers with a wide range of prices and ingredients to choose from.

2. In terms of brand awareness and brand associations were found to influence consumers' decision to repurchase desserts and beverages at After You Café. Therefore, After You is a good example for all those who are in this business. “After You” has the advantage of connecting with the consumer's memory by combining various outstanding features. The more “After You” has a distinctive point that is different from competitors, the more the brand stands out. The distinctive features that consumers can clearly see are the list of products displayed on the menu and the quality of desserts in After You Café. Therefore, companies in this field must constantly improve the quality of their products and services. In addition, they must regularly and continuously advertise or publicize various activities through online media to expand consumer awareness.

3. In terms of service marketing mix factors, it was found that personnel, promotion, process and price influence the decision to repurchase desserts and drinks at “After You Café” in Pathum Thani. This results in the following suggestions:

3.1 Personnel: it is important to continuously monitor and review staff performance to know the strengths and weaknesses and design training to improve their performance and efficiency.

3.2 Promotion: it is important to promote publicity and news on the online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and websites by introducing special seasonal desserts or drinks to promote consumer awareness. At present, social media plays an important role and enjoys great popularity among consumers whose purchasing decisions are based on social media.

3.3 Process: It is essential to organize a system to provide additional services to customers. Instead of offering services to customers who come to the cafe and queue up, there should be an online queuing and pre-ordering system.

3.4 Price: It is essential to set prices that reflect the quality of the product. Several respondents indicated that despite the high price, they were willing to pay it because they recognized the value and quality of the product and service. It is important that the price is not changed frequently, as frequent price changes could affect the reliability of the brand.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

1. A specific interview should be conducted to know in order to know the factors and needs that influence the decision to purchase products in a dessert café more accurately.

2. A specific survey should be conducted among consumers who use online services, as online services are becoming more popular. In this way, the opinions and factors that influence the decision to use online services can be revealed.

3. Differentiation strategies that affect the satisfaction of consumers who have ever visited a dessert café should be studied to determine the level of satisfaction and opinions of consumers.

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