

BRAND EQUITY AND SERVICE MARKETING MIX FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSUMERS' DECISION TO REPURCHASE STARBUCKS COFFEE IN PATHUM THANI PROVINCE DURING THE POST COVID-19 ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to investigate the influence of brand equity on consumers' decision to repurchase Starbucks coffee in Pathum Thani province and to investigate service marketing mix factors to affect consumers' decision to repurchase Starbucks coffee in Pathum Thani Province. The sample consisted of 400 consumers who used Starbucks coffee shops in Pathum Thani branches. The research instruments were questionnaires and statistics used to analyze the data consisting of frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The hypotheses were tested by multiple regression analysis.

The results of the study show that brand loyalty, brand awareness, and perceived quality, which are components of brand equity, significantly influence consumers' decisions to buy Starbucks coffee in the province of Pathum Thani. These factors demonstrate statistical significance at the 0.05 level and possess a predictive power of 61.50 percent. Additionally, the service marketing mix factors, namely "product and price, also significantly affect consumers' decisions to repurchase Starbucks coffee in the province of Pathum Thani. These variables have a predictive power of 53.50 percent and statistical significance at the 0.05 level.

Keywords: Brand Equity, Service Marketing Mix, Repurchase Decision, Starbucks

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Introduction

Coffee is the most popular drink in the world. It becomes a popular drink and plays an important role in the daily life of Thai people. The trend of drinking coffee also becomes a popular business, and the value is changed by consumers. Coffee shops become meeting places, workplaces or reading corners for various consumers. (Food Industry Development Foundation, 2019). It was found that the coffee shop business is interesting for small and large entrepreneurs. From Euromonitor's report, the value of the coffee market in Thailand is 21,220 million baht, which is an increase of 10% compared to last year. Moreover, the amount of coffee drunk in Thailand has increased by 5-6% on average during 2015-2017. The amount of coffee beans is not roasted and was imported from overseas in 2017. In 2012, the percentage was 93%. In the last 5 years, these statistics have shown that the amount of coffee drunk is continuously increasing (Kasikorn Research Center, 2019)

Starbucks started its business in Thailand and opened its first store in July 1998, and nowadays there are 409 stores in Thailand. Starbucks Coffee Company was founded in 1771 in the USA and developed into a place of meeting. Thus, Howard Schultz tried to make Starbucks third place. Moreover, home, office and Starbucks can be the place to drink coffee, meet and relax (Starbucks, 2022).

This means that the marketing tool can keep up with the changing situation nowadays. Targeted stimulation is one of the marketing channels. Especially, the digital market is a strategy that can reach and connect with consumers' needs and stimulate consumers' decision to repurchase Starbucks coffee, which affects consumers' decision to repurchase. It is said that consumer behaviour is an alternative to access information, and at the same time it is associated with consumers (Poompruk & Erbm, 2021) It is related to brand equity, such as 1) brand awareness 2) perceived quality, which is related to consumers' decision to repurchase products and services, and in the same case, the service marketing mix. (Thiangmak, Jinpra, Inkhum, & Chienwattanasook, 2022) and it made quality in the business. These include 1) the quality of the specific service, 2) trust, 3) quality of service, 4) reliability, and 5) attention. It influences the consumer's decision to buy again. (Chienwattansook & Thungwa, 2019) Repurchase is related to brand loyalty. It encourages consumers to love the brand and identity of products and services and be proud of the brand of the product.

According to the holistic academic knowledge, research and trend in different situations, these reasons will show the results of the study on the factors of brand equity and service marketing mix that influence consumers' decision to repurchase Starbucks coffee in Pathum Thani province. Clarify the reasons for the decision to repurchase Starbucks coffee and the needs of consumers to be considered. This information is an important part for managers and business people. It can be used to guide marketing strategy and planning and increase competitive efficiency.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the influence of brand equity on consumers' decision to repurchase Starbucks coffee in Pathum Thani province.

2. To investigate the service marketing mix factors influencing consumers' decision to repurchase Starbucks coffee in Pathum Thani province.

Literature Review

Concept and Theory of Repurchase

Repurchase refers to the process that occurs after the initial purchase of products or services. It involves consumers deciding to repurchase or seek renewed services from the same sellers or service providers (Gohary, Hamzulu, & Alizadeh, 2016). This repurchase behaviour has a significant impact on entrepreneurs, as it serves as an indication of consumer satisfaction and drives their efforts to improve and enhance the quality of their goods or services (Sohn & Kim, 2020). According to a study by Cronin, Brady, and Hult (2000), repurchase behaviour can be categorized into two distinct cases. The first case is repeated problem-solving, wherein consumers engage in repurchasing and continuously seek solutions to ongoing problems. This suggests that customers are actively evaluating their options and making conscious decisions based on their changing needs and preferences. The second case, as described by Ahmed, Shankat, Nawaz, Ahmed, and Usman (2011), is habitual decision-making. This involves repurchase habits driven by factors such as brand loyalty and inertia. In this scenario, consumers tend to exhibit a habitual pattern of repurchasing certain brands or services without actively considering alternative options. By understanding the different dimensions of repurchase behaviour, businesses can tailor their marketing strategies and customer retention efforts accordingly. They can focus on addressing ongoing problems and providing solutions for customers who engage in repeated problem-solving. Additionally, they can build brand loyalty and capitalize on inertia among customers who exhibit habitual decision-making tendencies (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Therefore, repurchase behaviour plays a vital role in shaping the relationship between consumers and businesses. It serves as an indicator of consumer satisfaction and provides valuable insights for entrepreneurs to improve their products or services. By recognizing the dual nature of repurchase behaviour, businesses can cater to both consumers engaged in ongoing problem-solving and those driven by habitual decision-making patterns.

Concept and Theory of Brand Equity

Brand equity encompasses the intangible value and reputation that a company's brand, including its name and symbol, holds. It represents the accumulated perceptions, associations, and experiences that consumers have with a particular brand. This value goes beyond the physical attributes of the products or services offered by the company. Aaker (1991) identified five fundamental aspects of brand equity that contribute to its overall strength. First, brand awareness refers to the degree to which consumers are familiar with a brand and its presence in the market. Second, brand associations encompass the mental connections and associations that consumers form with a brand, including its attributes, values, and positioning. Third, perceived quality refers to consumers' perception of the overall quality and reliability of a brand's products or services. Fourth, brand loyalty represents the degree of commitment and repeat purchase behaviour exhibited by consumers towards a specific brand. Finally, other proprietary brand assets include patents,

trademarks, and unique features that distinguish a brand from its competitors. Haeruddin's (2021) research examined the relationship between brand equity and the decision to repurchase. The study validated Aaker's five aspects of brand equity and found that brand awareness and brand loyalty significantly influence the decision to repurchase. This suggests that when consumers have a high level of awareness about a brand and are loyal to it, they are more likely to repurchase its products or services. Furthermore, Thuy, Anh, and Binh (2022) conducted a study to explore the impact of brand equity on the repurchase decision. Their findings corroborated the importance of brand awareness and brand associations. The results indicated that these two aspects of brand equity have a statistically significant influence on the decision to repurchase. This implies that when consumers have strong associations with a brand and are well aware of it, they are more likely to choose it again for future purchases. In this study, the researcher aims to investigate the relationship between brand equity and the repurchase decision by analyzing the variance in brand equity as a variable of interest. By examining how different levels of brand equity impact consumers' decisions to repurchase, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the role of brand equity in driving consumer behaviour and fostering customer loyalty. Because of this, the researchers came up with the following hypothesis:

H1: Brand equity to affect consumers' decision to repurchase Starbucks coffee in Pathum Thani Province.

Concept and Theory of Service Marketing Mix

The service marketing mix serves as a crucial marketing tool for businesses, guiding their overall marketing strategy. It encompasses various factors that influence consumer behaviour. According to Kuntonbut (2014), consumer behaviour can be analyzed through seven key aspects: product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process. In a research study conducted by Chana, Siripipatthannakul, Nurittamont, and Phayaphrom (2021), the focus was on the application of the service marketing mix within the business clinic group in Thailand. The findings revealed that the service marketing mix has a statistically significant impact on consumer satisfaction. This suggests that by effectively managing and integrating the various elements of the service marketing mix, businesses can enhance consumer satisfaction and potentially foster customer loyalty. Moreover, Jielong (2021) conducted a separate study that investigated the impact of the service marketing mix on customer satisfaction. The results further supported the notion that the service marketing mix has a statistically significant influence on customer satisfaction. This underscores the importance of carefully considering and managing the different elements of the service marketing mix to meet and exceed customer expectations. Taken together, these findings highlight the significance of the service marketing mix in shaping consumer behaviour and overall customer satisfaction. By strategically aligning and optimizing the product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process aspects of the service marketing mix, businesses can effectively attract and retain customers, leading to long-term success. Therefore, the hypothesis was set as the following:

H2: Service marketing mix factors to affect consumers' decision to repurchase Starbucks coffee in Pathum Thani Province.

Research Concept Framework

The research concept framework aims to explore how brand equity and service marketing mix factors influence consumers' repurchase decisions regarding Starbucks coffee in Pathum Thani Province during the post-COVID-19 economic slowdown. Initially, the study will place a significant emphasis on brand equity, which encompasses the brand's value and reputation. Esteemed scholars like Aaker (1991) have identified crucial dimensions of brand equity, including brand awareness, associations, perceived quality, and loyalty. Through evaluating consumers' perceptions of these dimensions concerning Starbucks coffee, the study seeks to comprehend the impact of brand equity on their decisions to repurchase. Additionally, the research will examine the role of service marketing mix factors in influencing repurchase decisions. These factors, including product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process (Kotler & Keller, 2016), collectively shape consumers' experiences and perceptions of the brand. By understanding the specific elements of the service marketing mix that significantly drive repurchase decisions, valuable insights can be gained to enhance customer loyalty and satisfaction for Starbucks. The study will be conducted in Pathum Thani Province, enabling the identification of localized factors that may influence consumers' repurchase behaviour during the post-COVID-19 economic slowdown. Analyzing the relationship between brand equity, service marketing mix factors, and consumers' decisions to repurchase Starbucks coffee in this specific region will provide actionable insights for Starbucks to navigate the challenges posed by the economic downturn and strengthen customer loyalty.

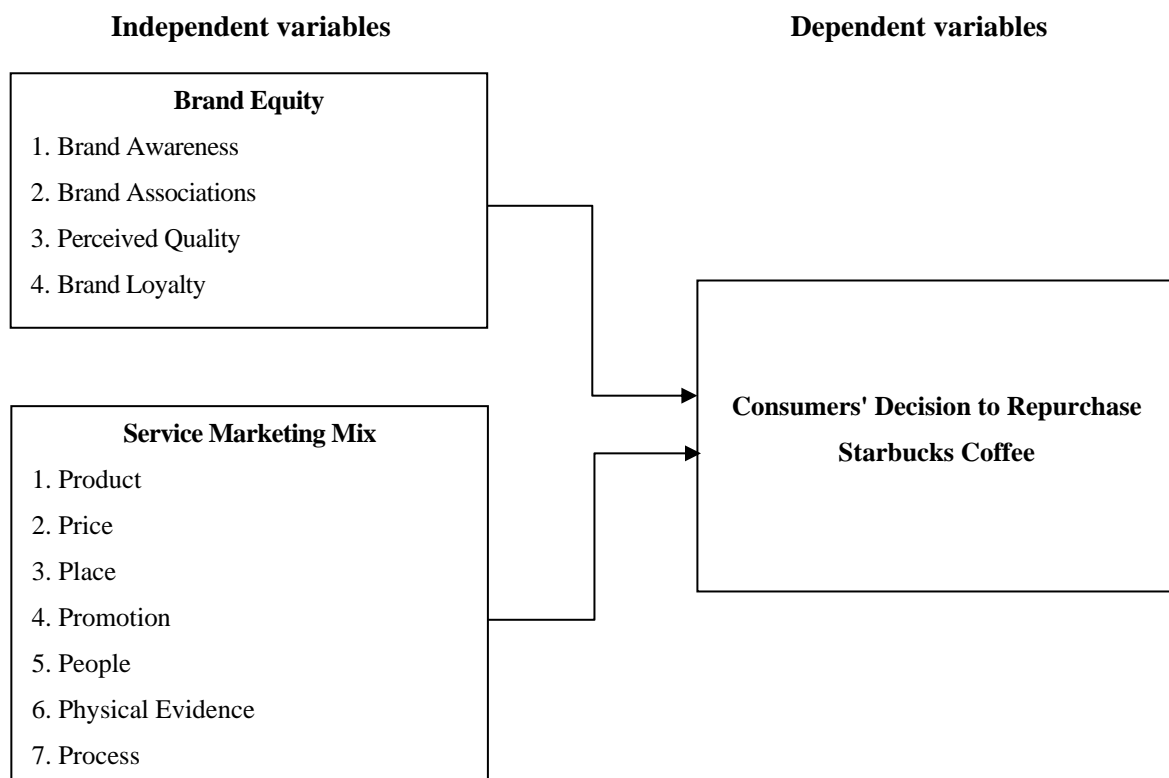


Figure 1 Research concept framework

Research Methodology

1. The population and sample in this study were consumers using the Starbucks service, in Pathum Thani province. The researcher was not able to determine dense populations. The formula of Conchran (1977) was used. The sample size was equal to 384 examples. The researcher kept the sub-examples to increase by 5% or 20 examples. The sample consisted of 400 examples selected from consumers who used Starbucks' services through purposive sampling. There are currently 15 different Starbucks locations spread out around Pathum Thani. There are three in the Mueang district, one in Lam Luk Ka, five in Khlong Luang, and six in the Thanyaburi area. The researchers targeted actual Starbucks consumers at each store until they had collected enough data. Each location serves an average of 26 customers.

2. The research instruments in this research were questionnaires that were developed and created based on concepts and theories related to different research. It consisted of 1) Information about the respondents' demographic characteristics, including their gender, age, educational level, occupation, and income; 2) A collection of 15 questions that assessed the brand equity factors of brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. These elements were adapted from Susanny and Kenny's (2015) research; 3) A collection of 35 questions examining the components of the marketing mix for services, including product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process. These items derive from research conducted by Rahah, Sumarwan, and Najib (2018); and 4) five questions adapted from Alfonsius, Depari, and Huang's (2021) explicitly target customers' repurchase decisions. These research. All questions were rated on a 5-level rating scale.

To ensure the quality of the questionnaire items, the researchers sought the opinions of three experts who evaluated the item-objective brand associations congruence (IOC). The results showed that each IOC score was higher than 0.6, indicating sufficient consensus. Cronbach's coefficient alpha was calculated to assess consistency, and as can be shown in Table 1 (Vanichbuncha & Vanichbuncha, 2015), all factors had consistency levels over 0.7. Thirty people who were not a part of the sampling group were selected to reflect the population as a whole.

Table 1 shows the reliability assessment of the questionnaire.

Factors/Components	Number of questions	Cronbach's alpha
Brand Equity	15	0.913
- Brand Awareness	4	0.745
- Brand Associations	3	0.785
- Perceived Quality	4	0.718
- Brand Loyalty	4	0.767

Table 1 shows the reliability assessment of the questionnaire. (Cont.)

Factors/Components	Number of questions	Cronbach's alpha
Service Marketing Mix	35	0.952
- Product	5	0.763
- Price	5	0.785
- Place	5	0.796
- Promotion	5	0.770
- People	5	0.807
- Physical Evidence	5	0.782
- Process	5	0.781
Consumers' Decision to Repurchase Starbucks Coffee	5	0.840
Overall	55	0.969

3. In analyzing the information in this research, descriptive statistics were used to analyze the general information of the sample group. It consisted of frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation and inferential statistics by Multiple Linear Regression Analysis (MRA).

Results

1. The consumers' factors revealed that most of the samples are female, 52%. Their ages ranged from 31 to 35 years which was 21.40%. Their education level was 57.70% (Bachelor's degree) and most of them were businessmen, 28%. The average income was between 35,001 bath, 27.40 %

2. The results of the study showed that brand equity consists of brand awareness, perceived quality and brand loyalty overall. As part of the aspects, perceived quality was found to have the highest mean ($\bar{X} = 4.10$, S.D. = 0.68). Secondly, brand associations ($\bar{X} = 4.07$, S.D. = 0.64). Thirdly, brand loyalty ($\bar{X} = 4.03$, S.D. = 0.72). Lastly, brand awareness was the lowest mean ($\bar{X} = 3.99$, S.D. = 0.68).

3. The results of consumers factors showed that price had the highest mean ($\bar{X} = 4.14$, S.D. = 0.63). Secondly, product/service ($\bar{X} = 4.14$, S.D. = 0.60). Thirdly, physical evidence ($\bar{X} = 4.11$, S.D. = 0.64). Fourthly, place ($\bar{X} = 4.10$, S.D. = 0.65). Fifthly, people ($\bar{X} = 4.07$, S.D. = 0.66). Sixthly. process ($\bar{X} = 4.07$, S.D. = 0.62). Lastly, promotion was the lowest mean ($\bar{X} = 3.99$, S.D. = 0.64).

4. The results of the study on consumers' repurchase of coffee when considering part of the aspects found that people who admired and become continuous consumers of Starbucks coffee ($\bar{X} = 4.02$, S.D. = 0.95). People returned to using Starbucks and its service even though the price would be increased by the economic crisis ($\bar{X} = 4.00$, S.D. = 1.05). People who committed to Starbucks and needed repurchasing in the future ($\bar{X} = 3.94$, S.D. = 0.95). And the lowest mean was the first-choice selection when needing to buy Starbucks coffee ($\bar{X} = 3.87$, S.D. = 0.99) respectively.

The Result of Hypothesis Testing

Table 2 Results of hypothesis Brand equity Factor affecting Customers' repurchase decision

Repurchase decision	b	Std. Error	β	t	Sig.
Constant	0.150	0.189		0.794	0.428
Brand Awareness	0.328	0.069	0.295	4.717*	0.000
Perceived Quality	0.153	0.065	0.130	2.348*	0.020
Brand Associations	0.122	0.072	0.106	1.709	0.089
Brand Loyalty	0.350	0.060	0.343	5.832*	0.000
R = .788, R ² = .620, Adjusted R ² = .615, SE _{Est} = 0.488, F = 114.849, p = .000					

* Statistically significant at the level of .05

According to results of Table 2 found that the brand equity factor consisted of brand loyalty (b = .350, t = 5.832, Sig = .000), brand awareness (b = .328, t = 4.717, Sig = .000) and perceived quality (b = .153, t = 2.348, Sig. = .020). It affected consumers' decision to repurchase Starbucks coffee in Pathum Thani Province respectively. Even though 3 variables could explain vary that affected consumers' decision to repurchase Starbucks coffee with 61.50% (Adjusted R² = .615). Statistically significant at the level of .05.

Table 3 Results of hypothesis service marketing mix factor affecting to repurchase decision

Repurchase decision	b	Std. Error	β	t	Sig.
Constant	-0.228	0.235		-0.972	0.322
Product/ Service	0.169	0.092	0.135	1.823	0.069
Price	0.303	0.083	0.257	3.649*	0.000
Place	0.114	0.078	0.101	1.466	0.144
Promotion	0.127	0.080	0.107	1.577	0.116
People	-0.099	0.085	-0.085	-1.163	0.246
Physical Evidence	0.038	0.083	0.032	0.459	0.646
Process	0.381	0.080	0.320	4.772*	0.000
R = .739, R ² = .546, Adjusted R ² = .535, SE _{Est} = 0.536, F = 47.788, p = .000*					

* Statistically significant at the level of .05

The results of Table 3 (next page) show the service marketing mix factor. Product ($b = .381$, $t = 4.772$, $Sig = .000$) and price ($b = .303$, $t = 3.649$, $Sig = .000$). They influenced consumers' decision to repurchase Starbucks coffee in Pathum Thani Province respectively. Although 2 variables can explain consumers' decision to repurchase Starbucks coffee at 53.50% level (adjusted $R^2 = .535$). Statistically significant at the .05 level

Discussion

Brand equity factors influence consumers' decision to repurchase Starbucks coffee in Pathum Thani province. It agreed with the hypothesis in terms of brand loyalty. It was the most effective decision of consumers to repurchase Starbucks coffee in Pathum Thani province. Based on consumers' tendency to drink Starbucks again next time, they recommend it to other people when they have the opportunity. Even though Starbucks is more expensive than other drinks in the economic crisis. Second, brand awareness found that Starbucks is a well-known beverage that consumers are familiar with and remember better than other coffee brands. The Starbucks symbol can also be remembered. Finally, perceived quality revealed that Starbucks' quality coffee beans are imported from overseas. This resulted in consumers receiving quality when purchasing Starbucks. In addition, the coffee preparation process was identical, and the taste was better than other coffees. This information was consistent with the research conducted by Saangsuphan and Chienwattanasook (2020) investigated the factors of brand equity and service marketing mix that affect the repurchase decisions of Café Amazon customers in department stores in Pathum Thani province. It was found that the factors of brand equity, brand loyalty, perceived quality, and brand associations had a statistically significant impact on consumers' decision to repurchase Amazon coffee in department store branches in Pathum Thani province, and were consistent with the research of Thiangmak, Jinphra, Inkum, and Chienwattanasook (2022) investigated the factors of brand equity and service marketing mix that affect consumers' decision to repurchase in Pathum Thani district and Khlong Luang district in Pathum Thani province. It was found that the factors of brand awareness and perceived quality had a statistically significant effect on consumers' decision to repurchase.

Service marketing mix factors influenced consumers' decision to repurchase Starbucks coffee in Pathum Thani province. It was consistent with the hypothesis in part of the process. It was the most effective consumer decision to buy Starbucks coffee again in Pathum Thani province. First, Starbucks is a well-known and diverse coffee beverage with good taste that is accepted by consumers. Second, Starbucks clarified the price and appropriateness and quality of the product. This information is consistent with the research of Wongtip, Suwattanadilok, and Rojniruttikul (2018), who studied the marketing mix for consumers' service decisions in a Korean Bingsu store in the Bangkok metropolitan area. It was found that the marketing mix for consumers' service decisions in a Korean Bingsu shop in Bangkok metropolitan area consists of product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical

evidence. It agreed with the research of Sungsuwan and Srikumpon (2020), who investigated the service marketing mix factors that influence the decision-making process of selecting fast-casual restaurants in Bangkok and metropolitan areas. The results showed that the service marketing mix factors in the form of physical evidence and price have a statistically significant influence on the decision-making process of selecting fast-casual restaurants in Bangkok and the metropolitan regions.

New Knowledge

Examining the brand equity and service-marketing mix factors that influence consumers' decision to repurchase Starbucks coffee in Pathum Thani province, we found that brand equity in the form of brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, and service-marketing mix factors in the form of service and price have a statistically significant influence on consumers' decision to repurchase Starbucks coffee in Pathum Thani province. We found that these reasons have an impact on repurchase. Brand equity is a prominent identity. It consists of positioning; it is the highest in the coffee shop group. Starbucks has a better strategy than its competitors. Above all, it focuses on customer service, and the access to individual customers and members is easy to use. In addition, the excellent price reflects the quality of the products. Starbucks is more capable than its competitors.

Suggestions

1. The results of the study of brand equity influence consumers' decision to repurchase Starbucks coffee in Pathum Thani province. The researcher would like to suggest the following.

1.1 Brand loyalty was the most effective factor in consumers' decision to repurchase a coffee. It is a trend to motivate the purchase behaviour of coffee products, even if the price is quite high during the economic crisis. The recommendation is that other people who have the opportunity and trend to drink Starbucks coffee should do the same. Therefore, the business owner should take advantage of brand loyalty and apply it to the service so that the products are satisfactory and reliable. This will improve the image of the company and increase its respectability.

1.2 Brand awareness influences consumers' decision to buy coffee again because it tastes better than other coffee brands and because they have confidence in the coffee quality. The price is reasonable and offers good value for money. Therefore, the entrepreneur should develop quality and service. This includes planning marketing and advertising through online media, which plays an important role nowadays. This will increase the perception channel and stimulate more demand for purchase and service.

1.3 Brand associations affect consumers' repurchase decisions. Starbucks store is an excellent decoration and people are loyal to the brand. Therefore, the entrepreneur should make a connection between brand awareness and service. To create a relationship with consumers such as goods to be types of collection limited and circulation. It represents selling in daily life and the brand will be

remembered. At the same time, the brand will be in conversation with the consumer and combined with the partner's service. Consumers can access different qualifications and have a good attitude towards the products. The impression will occur and the repurchase returned later.

2. The results of the study service marketing mix influence consumers' decision to repurchase Starbucks coffee in Pathum Thani province. The researcher would like to suggest the following.

2.1 Service process influences consumers' repurchase decision. It can predict the trend of consumer behaviour on Starbucks coffee. The service should be fast, especially during rush hour. The purchase should be made before work or after going home, and there should be a Starbucks Card in the form of an application. There will be a list of drink and food menus and stores and an e-wallet for payment. Thus, the entrepreneur should provide an important quality standard and impression to consumers. Teamwork and staff are the key people to provide quality service. Consumers can accept the service and quality. This will affect the subsequent repurchase.

2.2 Price: From the results, the overall price has an impact on consumers' repurchase decisions. In particular, the price should be clearly stated, payment by credit card should be possible, and the quality of the coffee and the atmosphere in the coffee store should be appropriate for the different products. Thus, the entrepreneur should keep the standard and indicate an important price factor. It should give importance to reasonable price and quantity. Consumers are paying a good value. Consumers always compare the brand value and price. Understanding the perception of consumers should be taken into account. It should encourage consumers to accept a more expensive price, which will affect the subsequent repurchase.

Suggestions for the Further Research

1. It should study the economic factors and equity to influence consumer demand and repurchase of coffee products, conduct a comparative study on the different types of coffee businesses to analyze the advantages and disadvantages, and later follow the development of the coffee business

2. Behavior and demand for the use of coffee services should be studied to support knowledge in this area. Further research should examine other brands to compare results. In addition, an obvious comparison group of consumers should be seen in person. These results should be used to improve and develop the strategy and should be linked to individual market share. Create satisfaction among people who use the service or increase market share.

3. Qualitative methods should be used in the future. Especially for the in-depth interview to explore consumers' needs. To obtain revealed information useful for developing the service model and meeting the needs of customers. Problems or limitations of coffee shop service should be researched to find out and overcome them in future research. These will enable managers to plan or provide a strategy for business operations to achieve successful goals.

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