Journal Objectives

RMUTT Global Business Accounting and Finance Review (GBAFR) has objectives as follows:

1. To be a source of academic works regarding to business management, accounting and finance for scholars as well as any interested persons from both public and private sectors who can utilize them to reference and apply the knowledge obtained from this journal for both individual and organizational benefits either in national or international level.

2. To be a medium for exchanging knowledge in business management, accounting and finance in aspects of theories, related concepts, modern business management, research techniques and methodology, application of knowledge as well as research experiences among faculty members, academicians, researchers, executives, business persons, students and general people who can bring the knowledge from the journal to create benefits and development to the country.

3. To enhance academic ability of faculty members, academicians, researchers, executives, business persons, students and general people about creative researches and knowledge development for benefiting individual, business, industrial and social demands.

4. To develop the potentials of Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi to have been widely recognized for academics, researches, and academic publication in the international standards and recognition.

Possible Fields

RMUTT Global Business Accounting and Finance Review (GBAFR) has opened to accept academic and research articles in the following areas:

- Businesses aspects including economics, marketing, management, logistics and supply chain management, business administration, international business administration, and other related fields,
- Accounting aspects including accounting principles, concepts and theories, accounting execution, accounting system, corporate accounting, accounting laws and regulation, accounting auditing, taxation and other related fields,
- Financial aspects including financial, concepts and theories, financial market, instruments, and financial management Investment and other related fields.

Piracy

Articles will be published in this journal must not be ever presented and published or in the evaluation processes in any other journals. Any piracy occurred will be only under the responsibility of the author (s). The journal will not be responsible for such consequences.

Evaluation Process

RMUTT Global Business Accounting and Finance Review (GBAFR) employs double-blinded peer review method which the authors and expert reviewers do not know and are able to track each other's. At least two expert reviewers from related fields will be cordially invited to assess the articles submitted to the Journal.

Period of Issued Journal

RMUTT Global Business Accounting and Finance Review (GBAFR) will be issued thrice a year with 5-10 academic or research articles. The periods are as follows:

- 1st Issue: January – June
- 2nd Issue: July – December

Contact

Doctor of Philosophy Program Office, the Faculty of Business Administration,
Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi (RMUTT)
39 Moo 1, Rangsit-Nakhonnayok Rd. Klong 6,
Thanyaburi, Pathum Thani, 12110 Thailand
Website: http://www.journal.rmutt.ac.th
Phone: +66 2 5494819, +66 2 5493235, +66 2 5494809
Fax: +66 2 5493243
Email: gbafr@rmutt.ac.th

Editorial Note

RMUTT Global Business Accounting and Finance Review (GBAFR) is an academic journal prepared by Graduate Studies (Ph.D. Program), Faculty of Business Administration, Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi (RMUTT). The GBAFR journal aims to disseminate good academic outputs related to business administration, accounting, and finance aspects of individuals from both within and outside the university. It is an intermediate for exchanging academic views as well as a source for promoting and developing research competency of faculty staffs, academicians, researchers, students, and any persons in terms of business administration, accounting, and finance fields.

This journal published seven research and academic papers, and one book review. In addition, each of the research and academic articles presented such interesting concepts, for employees' motivation, customer's satisfaction, financial planning for retirement, sustainability reporting and competitive advantage strategy, leading to creating new knowledge to the reader. Therefore, this journal is a channel disseminating the knowledge of business administration, accounting, and finance which related persons could apply it for further benefits.

Lastly, the editorial department and editorial board would like to considerably thank you for supporting and pushing forward this journal to occur and well accomplish. We are hopeful of your good cooperation and continuing support in the future.

Asst. Prof. Suraporn Onputtha, Ph.D.
Editor-in-Chief

Table of Content

page

Journal Objectives/ Possible Fields/ Piracy/ i

Evaluation Process/ Period of Issued Journal ii

Editor Team iii

Editorial Note v

Table of Content vi

Research Articles

- ❖ FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND REPURCHASE INTENTION OF ONLINE FOOD DELIVERY SERVICE IN CAMBODIA 1

Virak Both Dareth, Sunida Piriyapada, Sokha Norng

Keywords: UTAUT-2, Customer satisfaction, Repurchase intention, Trust, Online food delivery

- ❖ FACTORS INFLUENCING USERS' INTENTION TO ADOPT TIKTOK THROUGH USER SATISFACTION IN PHNOM PENH CITY 19

Vichhay Sour, Sunida Piriyapada

Keywords: Technology acceptance model, Theory of planned behavior, Content richness, Flow state, Personal innovativeness, User satisfaction

- ❖ THE IMPACT OF CORPORATE BRAND COMPETITIVENESS AND SERVICE QUALITY ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN USING SMART CLASSROOM PRODUCTS: A CASE OF BEIJING ORIENTAL ZHONGYUAN DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY CO., LTD. 32

Libo Yan, Chitralada Trisakhon

Keywords: Human resource management practices, Employee performance, Hotel

- ❖ THE IMPACT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN THE CADRE TRAINING AND CONFERENCE CENTER (HOTEL) IN XICHENG DISTRICT, BEIJING 46

Liang Gu, Chitralada Trisakhon

Keywords: Environmental, Social and governance: ESG, Systematic risk, ESG performance

- ❖ GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRITOURISM MARKETING 58

Siripatsorn Bhuwakietkumjohn, Panisa Mechinda

Keywords: Destination competitiveness, Behavioral intention, Travel behavior, Agritourism

- ❖ THE RELATIONSHIP OF ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION, FOREIGN CUSTOMER TRUST, DISTRIBUTION PARTNERSHIP ON BUSINESS PERFORMANCE-THAI FURNITURE AND HOME DECORATION EXPORT COMPANY 85

Nataorn Mahatamnuchok, Thanatmet Wacharapibulwong, Watchara Wetprasit, Prasitpon Kengthong

Keywords: Entrepreneur orientation, Foreign customer trust, Distribution partnership, Business performance

Table of Content (Cont.)

page

❖ ENHANCING CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION PERFORMANCE THROUGH COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY QUALITY 94

Metinee Rasadaraksa, Sarakul Sukortprommee

Keywords: Cross-cultural acceptance, Communication technology quality, Cross-cultural communication

Book Review

❖ INTRODUCTION INTO DIPLOMACY 109

Author: Sabri Kiçmari

Reviewed by: Kittisak Wongmahesak

RMUTT Global Business Accounting and Finance Review (GBAFR)
Volume 8 Issue 2 : July - December 2024

FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND REPURCHASE INTENTION OF ONLINE FOOD DELIVERY SERVICE IN CAMBODIA

Virak Both Daretha[a*], Sunida Piriyapada[b], Sokha Norng[c]

[a b] International College, Panyapiwat Institute of Management, Nonthaburi, Thailand
[c] Centre for Research & Innovation, ACLEDA University of Business, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
*Corresponding author's e-mail: 6471104197@stu.pim.ac.th

Received: 13 February 2024 / Revised: 30 October 2024 / Accepted: 13 November 2024

ABSTRACT

Purpose – The focus of this research is to identify and analyze the key factors that influence repurchase intention of online food delivery services in Cambodia. It aims to understand how aspects such as performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating condition, hedonic motivation, price value, habit, and trust, impact consumers' satisfaction to continue using these services.

Methodology – A quantitative method was employed using a purposive sampling survey, involving 400 respondents in Phnom Penh with prior experience using online food delivery services. Data were collected through a Google Form and analyzed using multiple regression to test the proposed model.

Results – The study revealed that performance expectancy, effort expectancy, and trust positively influence customer satisfaction (CS), with standardized regression weights of B = 0.194, B = 0.409, and B = 0.079, respectively. Among these factors, effort expectancy has the greatest impact on CS. Conversely, price value negatively affects CS, with a coefficient of B = -0.072. However, social influence, facilitating conditions, hedonic motivation, and habit do not positively impact customer satisfaction (CS) because their p-values exceeded 0.05. Lastly, customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention, with a coefficient of B = 0.635.

Implications – Enhancing performance expectancy, trust, and the ease of the ordering process while addressing pricing perceptions is crucial for improving customer satisfaction and driving repurchase intentions in online food delivery services in Cambodia.

Originality/Value – This study provides valuable insights for anyone seeking a comprehensive understanding of the food delivery service landscape on online platforms in Cambodia. In particular, the app developers, restaurants, and food providers can consider partnering with promising and quality-oriented online food delivery services to enhance their business prospects.

Keywords: UTAUT-2, Customer satisfaction, Repurchase intention, Trust, Online food delivery

Paper Type: Research Article

INTRODUCTION

Food consumption behaviors have significantly changed since the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in early 2020 (Chenarides et al., 2020). Before the pandemic, people went out to have breakfast, lunch, or dinner with family, friends, or special ones as their leisure activities. However, most countries around the world were in a lockdown situation, which did not allow people to go out or travel elsewhere in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19. This leads to the fall of some businesses, especially the food industry which is the basic need of people to survive daily.

Citation:
Daretha, V. B., Piriyapadab, S., & Norng, S. (2024). Factors Influencing Customer Satisfaction and Repurchase Intention of Online Food Delivery Service in Cambodia. RMUTT Global Business Accounting and Finance Review, 8(2), 1-18. https://doi.org/10.60101/gbafr.2024.272298

Replacing this brick-and-mortar business model, a new platform of food delivery emerges by phone call, or order through a Facebook page. Merging with e-commerce platforms, online food delivery (OFD) service comes up as an application which connects restaurants, food stores, shop venders, and markets directly to the consumers. There are two types of OFD service, namely the one that innovated brick and mortar themselves and the e-commerce platform apps. According to Yeo et al. (2017), The first category is largely comprised of fast food chains such as Pizza Hut, McDonalds, Domino's Pizza, Kentucky Fried Chicken and so on, and the second category, known as Online Food Delivery, is comprised of multiple restaurant intermediaries that provide delivery services for a large range of restaurants such as Food Panda, Room Service, GrubHub, Eat24hours.com, Just-eat.com, Delivery.com and more.

Likewise, online food delivery service is currently booming in Cambodia (Ren et al., 2020). One of the low-middle income countries, Cambodia, has a population of around 16.94 million people in 2023. As of January 2022, there were around 13.44 million Internet users in Cambodia (Kemp, 2022). With the growth of internet users, online food delivery generates around USD 135.90 million in 2023 and is projected to reach USD 296.50 million in 2027 (Statista, n.d.). Even though online food delivery is growing at the current stage. Yet there is a limit study on customer satisfaction towards this service, especially the repurchase intention of online food delivery service. Ren et al. (2020) examined the behavioral intention of consumer as the outcome of adoption of information technology innovation, perceived ease of use, social influence, price value, and performance expectancy. Therefore, the focus of this research is to explore the factors influencing customer satisfaction and repurchase intention within the online food delivery service (OFDS) sector in Cambodia. By examining elements such as performance expectancy, effort expectancy, trust, and pricing perceptions, the study aims to provide insights that can guide app developers, restaurants, and food providers in optimizing their partnerships and enhancing customer experiences on online platforms.

In response to the above rationale, this study aims to explore customer satisfaction within the online food delivery service sector in Cambodia. Specifically, the research seeks to examine the factors that influence customer satisfaction with online food delivery services. Moreover, to determine the impact of customer satisfaction on repurchase intention for online food delivery services. In order to fulfill these objectives, the research will address two main questions. Firstly, what factors influence customer satisfaction with online food delivery services? Secondly, how does customer satisfaction affect the intention to repurchase online food delivery services?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT-2), created by Venkatesh et al. (2012), attempts to determine the continuous intention of customers to use a new system. According to Venkatesh et al. (2012), the intention to use technology is influenced by performance expectancy (perceived usefulness), effort expectancy (perceived ease of use), social influence (importance of social network to the individual), facilitating condition (possession of the resources to use the technology), hedonic motivation (perceived enjoyment), price value (trade-off between perceived benefits and monetary costs of technology value), and habit (the passage of time from the initial technology usage). These predictors are moderated by age, gender, and experience. According to Lim and Rasul (2022), customer satisfaction happened when customers are satisfied after they have been served and are likely to visit the store again. Previous studies showed that repurchase intention had significant effected by customer satisfaction in online shopping (Lin & Lekhawipat, 2014), and online food delivery in Bangkok (Gilitwala & Nag, 2019).

Ren et al. (2020) has already examined the influential factors affecting customers' intention to adopt OFD in Cambodia; however, they do not touch facilitating condition, hedonic motivation, habit, trust, and customer satisfaction. Another difference is that this study focuses on repurchase intention rather than intention. Therefore, this study examines the impact of Performance Expectancy, Effort Expectancy, Social Influence, Facilitating Condition, Hedonic motivation, Price

Value, Habit, and Trust on Customer Satisfaction with online food delivery service. Related research and hypothesis development can be written as follow:

Performance Expectancy and Customer Satisfaction

Venkatesh et al. (2012) define performance expectancy as the degree to which users perceive a technology as beneficial or useful. This concept is crucial in understanding how customers engage with new systems and applications, specifically in the scenario of mobile food ordering apps. According to the views of Alalwan (2020), performance expectancy encompasses the capacity of these new systems to help customers achieve their needs and desires more conveniently and efficiently. The ability of a mobile app to optimize the ordering process, offer timely updates, and ensure reliable experience to user in order to influence user satisfaction. Alalwan's research (2020) emphasizes the importance of performance expectancy in enhancing customer satisfaction, specifically in mobile food ordering applications. Especially, when customers believe an app will help them complete their tasks more effectively, they are more likely to report higher levels of satisfaction. This relationship is fundamental for businesses operating in the increasingly competitive food delivery market, where customer experience is paramount. In addition, performance expectancy not only impacts immediate customer satisfaction but also has more extensive implications for user loyalty and retention. When customers perceive that an online food ordering app meets or exceeds their expectations in terms of performance, they are more inclined to use the app again in the future. This would create a positive feedback loop: satisfied customers are likely to recommend the service to others, further enhancing the app's reputation and user base. In summary, the perception of performance expectancy plays a crucial role in shaping customer experiences with online food ordering apps. By ensuring that their applications are user-friendly and effective in meeting customer needs, businesses can significantly boost customer satisfaction and foster long-term loyalty. Therefore, the hypothesis can be written as follow:

H_1 Performance expectancy positively affects on customer satisfaction with online food delivery.

Effort Expectancy and Customer Satisfaction

Venkatesh et al. (2012) cited that effort expectancy as the degree to which consumers perceive technology as easy to use, building on earlier work by Venkatesh et al. (2003). This concept is particularly relevant in the scenario of online food delivery services, where the ease of use can significantly impact customer experiences. According to Ramos cited (2022), effort expectancy relates to the ability of these services to process consumer food orders quickly and efficiently, which is crucial in today’s dynamic environment. When customers find an online food delivery platform easy to utilize and navigate, their possibility of completing a purchase increase substantially. Furthermore, effort expectancy serves as the predictor of purchase decisions. Research conducted by Gunden et al. (2020) highlights its significance in shaping consumer behavior, suggesting that when users feel confident in the usability of a platform, they are more inclined to engage in transactions. This relationship between effort expectancy and customer satisfaction has been supported by various studies across different contexts. For instance, Kaewkitipong et al. (2016) demonstrated that effort expectancy significantly influences students' satisfaction with online learning environments. Comparably, Amin et al. (2014) found a positive correlation between effort expectancy and satisfaction in mobile website usage, while Zhou (2011) highlighted its impact on mobile payment experiences. These outcomes emphasize the critical role that effort expectancy plays not only in customer satisfaction but also in fostering repeat usage and loyalty toward online food delivery services. Therefore, businesses must prioritize enhancing the user experience by ensuring that their platforms are intuitive and user-friendly. This focus on reducing friction in the ordering process can lead to improved customer satisfaction and, ultimately, increased sales and retention. Therefore, the hypothesis can be written as follow:

H_2 Effort expectancy positively affects on customer satisfaction with online food delivery.

Social Influence and Customer Satisfaction

Ren et al. (2020) describe social influence as encompassing social norms or subjective norms, which play an important role in shaping individuals' perceptions and behaviors regarding technology adoption. Verkasalo et al. (2010) define social influence as “the degree to which individuals have the impression that important others believe they should use a new system” (p. 246). This definition emphasizes the significance of social dynamics in the decision-making process, indicating that the opinions of peers, family, and other significant individuals can significantly sway a person's choice to engage with new technologies. Ren et al. (2020) extend this by referring to social factors as comprising reference groups, family, roles, or social status. These elements can create pressure or encouragement for individuals to adopt certain technologies. Especially in contexts where social interaction is integral, such as smartphone social apps. The influence of these social factors is not merely theoretical; empirical studies support their impact on user’s behavior. For instance, Hsiao et al. (2016) discovered that social influence has a significant effect on users' satisfaction with smartphone social applications. Their research suggests that when users perceive that their social circles support or endorse a particular app, their overall satisfaction with the app increases. This connection between social influence and user satisfaction is essential for developers and marketers of mobile applications. By leveraging social influence, companies can create marketing strategies that encourage users to share their positive experiences within their social networks. As users witness their peers engaging with and endorsing an application, they are more likely to adopt and enjoy the same experiences. In conclusion, understanding and harnessing social influence can significantly enhance user satisfaction and promote the successful adoption of new technologies. Therefore, the hypothesis can be written as follow:

H_3 Social influence positively affects on customer satisfaction with online food delivery.

Facilitating Condition and Customer Satisfaction

Facilitating conditions play a critical role in shaping consumers’ perceptions regarding the availability of resources and support necessary to engage in specific behaviors. As outlined by Venkatesh et al. (2012), these conditions significantly influence how consumers interact with technologies, such as applications. When users perceive that they have adequate resources and support, their confidence in utilizing these applications increases, which in turn reduces any uncertainties they may have about using them. This idea is reinforced by Al-Gahtani et al. (2007), who emphasize that heightened confidence leads to a smoother experience when engaging with new technologies. Research has consistently shown that facilitating conditions can significantly impact the intention to use various systems. For example, Duyck et al. (2010) found that in the context of Picture Archiving and Communication Systems (PACS), facilitating conditions were crucial in determining users' willingness to adopt the technology. The implications of this concept extend beyond just healthcare technologies; studies have shown that facilitating conditions also influence customer satisfaction in e-government services, as highlighted by Chan et al. (2010). In the realm of health informatics, Maillet et al. (2015) further substantiated this connection by illustrating how adequate facilitating conditions enhance user experiences and satisfaction. In summary, facilitating conditions are essential in shaping user behavior and perceptions towards various technologies. By ensuring that consumers feel supported and equipped with the necessary resources, organizations can foster higher levels of confidence and satisfaction. This understanding underscores the importance of addressing facilitating conditions in the design and implementation of technology-driven solutions across different sectors. Through effective facilitation, organizations can enhance user experiences and ultimately drive greater adoption of their systems. Therefore, the hypothesis can be written as follow:

H_4 Facilitating condition positively affects on customer satisfaction with online food delivery.

Hedonic Motivation and Customer Satisfaction

Hedonic motivation, as cited by Venkatesh et al. (2012), refers to the enjoyment or pleasure derived from using technology. This concept is critical in understanding technology acceptance and usage, as demonstrated by Brown and Venkatesh (2005), who highlighted its influential role in shaping user experiences. The enjoyment derived from technology can significantly impact an individual's willingness to adopt and continue using a particular system or application. Recent studies provide compelling evidence that hedonic motivation serves as a predictor of purchase intention in various contexts. For example, Nordhoff et al. (2020) found that hedonic motivation significantly influences individuals' intentions to buy and utilize conditionally automated cars. Similarly, research by Rasli et al. (2020) indicates that this motivational factor also affects consumers' decisions to purchase from online food delivery apps. These findings suggest that when users derive pleasure from engaging with a technology, they are more likely to embrace it and integrate it into their daily lives. Moreover, hedonic motivation is closely linked to user satisfaction across different types of mobile applications. Hsiao et al. (2016) demonstrated that hedonic motivation has a significant effect on user satisfaction with mobile social apps, indicating that the enjoyment factor enhances the overall user experience. Additionally, Iyer et al. (2018) found similar results in the context of mobile rail applications, while Alalwan (2020) reported that hedonic motivation positively impacts user satisfaction with mobile food ordering apps. In conclusion, hedonic motivation plays a vital role in technology acceptance and usage, influencing both purchase intentions and user satisfaction across various applications. As such, developers and marketers should prioritize creating engaging and enjoyable user experiences to foster greater adoption and satisfaction among their users. Therefore, the hypothesis can be written as follow:

H_5 Hedonic motivation positively affects on customer satisfaction with online food delivery.

Price Value and Customer Satisfaction

Price value, as defined by Venkatesh et al. (2012), refers to the cognitive tradeoff consumers make between the perceived benefits of an application and the monetary costs associated with its use. This concept is rooted in the idea that consumers assess the advantages they receive from a system against the financial expenditure it requires. According to Dodds et al. (1991), price value is realized when consumers evaluate whether the benefits outweigh the costs of using a particular technology or service. When consumers decide that the benefits of a system exceed its financial cost, they are more inclined to adopt and use that system. Rasli et al. (2020) reinforce this notion by emphasizing that a favorable price value can significantly increase the possibility of system usage. This relationship is critical in understanding consumer behavior, especially in technology adoption and online services. Several studies have provided evidence supporting the impact of price value on the intention to use information technology applications. Research by Venkatesh et al. (2012) and Deng et al. (2014) indicates that consumers are more likely to engage with IT applications when they perceive a favorable price-to-value ratio. Furthermore, this concept is particularly relevant in the scenario of online food delivery apps, as highlighted by Rasli et al. (2020), where price value plays an important role in consumer decisions. More importantly, price value has been shown to have a positive and significant effect on online consumer satisfaction. Lin et al. (2011) discovered that when consumers perceive that the value they receive from a service justifies its cost, their overall satisfaction increases. This highlights the importance of not just ensuring competitive pricing but also effectively communicating the benefits of a service to enhance customer satisfaction and foster loyalty in increasingly competitive markets.

H_6 Price value positively affects on customer satisfaction with online food delivery.

Habit and Customer Satisfaction

Venkatesh et al. (2012) define habit as the extent to which individuals perform behaviors automatically due to prior learning experiences, a concept elaborated by Limayem et al. (2007). In the current landscape of ubiquitous information systems (IS), consumers increasingly develop habitual use patterns that facilitate the adoption of new technologies (Gunden et al., 2020; Jasperson et al., 2005). For example, when consumers order food, consumers often follow a structured pathway guided by online food delivery systems (OFDS). This linear ordering process enhances their learning experience and optimizes future interactions, making the entire experience smoother and more efficient (Gunden et al., 2020, p. 1330). In previous studies have consistently demonstated that habit has a positive influence on the intention to use online food delivery services. Research by Gunden et al. (2020) and Rasli et al. (2020) confirms that individuals who develop habitual patterns in utilizing these services are more likely to continue engaging with. This habitual behavior simplifies the ordering process as well as fosters a sense of comfort and familiarity, which can enhance customer loyalty and satisfaction.

Additionally, habit plays an important moderating role in the relationship between user satisfaction and the intention to continue using applications. Wang and Lin (2021) found that habit significantly moderates this relationship in the context of mobile learning apps, suggesting that users who have established a routine of using such applications are more likely to remain satisfied and engaged over time. In summary, understanding the impact of habit on technology adoption is essential for businesses aiming to enhance user engagement and satisfaction. By creating user-friendly interfaces and consistently delivering quality services, companies can encourage the formation of habits that promote repeat usage and foster long-term customer loyalty in the competitive online food delivery market. Therefore, the hypothesis can be written as follow:

H_7 Habit positively affects on customer satisfaction with online food delivery.

Trust and Customer Satisfaction

According to Kim et al. (2011), trust is defined as a feeling of security and a willingness to depend on someone or something. In the context of e-commerce, trust develops when customers have positive experiences with products or services they have previously purchased. This sense of trust is crucial for online shopping, as it can significantly affect customer satisfaction and overall loyalty to a brand. Research by Yoon (2002) identifies four key factors that contribute to building trust among online shoppers: transactional security, website properties, search functionality, and personal variables. When these factors are adequately addressed, customers are more likely to feel secure in their purchasing decisions, which in turn enhances their overall satisfaction with the shopping experience. Furthermore, trust plays a critical role in influencing user satisfaction specifically within the realm of online food delivery services. Zulkarnain et al. (2015) found that when customers trust the food delivery platform, their satisfaction levels increase, leading to repeat usage and customer loyalty. Trust is not only limited to the online platform itself but also extends to the home delivery personnel. Research by Uzir et al. (2021) indicates that trust in delivery staff significantly affects customer satisfaction in home delivery services, as customers are more likely to feel secure and content when they trust the individuals responsible for delivering their orders. In summary, trust is an essential element in e-commerce that directly impacts customer satisfaction, especially in online food delivery services. By ensuring transactional security and maintaining high website quality, along with focusing on personal interactions, businesses can foster a trusting environment that enhances customer experiences and drives repeat business. Ultimately, building trust should be a priority for any company looking to succeed in the competitive online marketplace. Therefore, the hypothesis can be written as follow:

H_8 Trust positively affects on customer satisfaction with online food delivery.

Customer Satisfaction and Repurchase Intention

Customer satisfaction typically arises after a customer has been served. Once a customer experiences satisfaction with a product or service, they are more likely to return to the store or service provider in the future (Lim & Rasul 2022). This notion highlights the importance of delivering quality experiences that meet or exceed customer expectations. Customer satisfaction can be defined as "the individual's perception of the performance of the products or services in relation to his or her expectations" (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004). This definition emphasizes the subjective nature of satisfaction, which varies from person to person based on their individual expectations and experiences. For businesses, understanding the factors that contribute to customer satisfaction is critical for fostering loyalty and encouraging repeat visits. When customers perceive that a product or a service meets their expectations, their satisfaction levels increase, leading to a positive emotional response that can influence future purchasing decisions.

This cycle of satisfaction and loyalty is essential for maintaining a competitive edge in the marketplace. Furthermore, high levels of customer satisfaction can lead to positive word-of-mouth referrals, where satisfied customers share their experiences with friends and family, further enhancing the store's reputation. Conversely, if a customer feels that their expectations have not been met, it can lead to dissatisfaction and a reluctance to return, which can be detrimental to a business. In summary, customer satisfaction is a crucial factor that influences consumer behavior and business success. By focusing on understanding and meeting customer expectations, businesses can promote the loyal customer base that returns for future purchases, ultimately driving long-term success and profitability. Therefore, the hypothesis can be written as follow:

H_9 Customer satisfaction positively affects on repurchase intention of online food delivery.

Repurchase Intention

Repurchase intention is a critical post-purchase concept that reflects an individual's decision to buy a product or service from a particular firm again, influenced by their current experiences and anticipated future circumstances (Gilitwala & Nag, 2019; Hellier et al., 2003). This intention is a key indicator of customer loyalty, as it signifies a commitment to continue engaging with a brand rather than seeking alternatives. Gruen et al. (2006) emphasize that repurchase intention is not just about the desire to buy again; it also represents a deeper connection between the customer and the brand. When customers are satisfied with their experiences, they are more likely to remain loyal and continue purchasing products from the same online retailer in the future (Chiu et al., 2009). Several studies have studied the relationship between customer satisfaction and repurchase intention, consistently highlighting its significance in online shopping contexts. For example, research conducted by Lin and Lekhawipat (2014) demonstrated a strong correlation between customer satisfaction and repurchase intention in online shopping environments. Similarly, Cha and Lee (2021) found this relationship to be significant in the online food market in South Korea, indicating that satisfied customers are more likely to return for future purchases. Moreover, Gilitwala and Nag (2019) reported similar findings within the context of online food delivery services in Bangkok, reinforcing the notion that customer satisfaction is a vital driver of repurchase intention. In conclusion, understanding repurchase intention is essential for businesses aiming to foster customer loyalty and enhance their competitive edge. By prioritizing customer satisfaction, companies can encourage repeat purchases, ultimately driving long-term success and profitability in the increasingly competitive online marketplace.

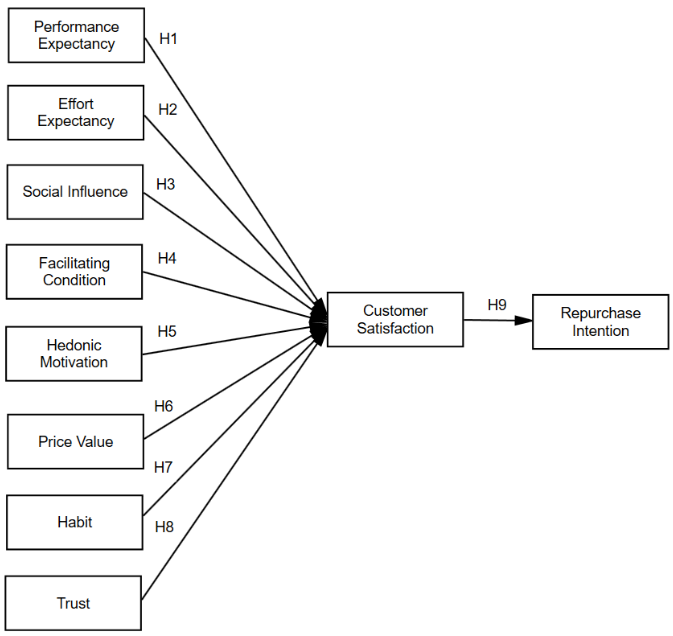


Figure 1. Hypothesis Model

METHODOLOGY

The researcher selected participants who reside in Phnom Penh City and have had at least one experience ordering food online. According to (Macrotrends, n.d.), there are 2,281,000 people living in Phnom Penh. Hence, the sample size was calculated by formulas, specifically established by Yamane (1967) for known proportions as the following:

$$\boldsymbol{n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}}$$

Figure 2. Sample Size Determination Formula

where n = the sample size,
N = population size
e refers to a margin error. Assuming that the "e" margin error was set at 5%
Therefore, the calculation for the required sample size as follows:

$$\boldsymbol{n = \frac{2{,}281{,}000}{1+2{,}281{,}000\,(0.05)^2}} = 399.93$$

As the result, the study chose around 400 respondents by rounding up the sample size calculation. Furthermore, the study used purposive sampling to identify the consumers who had experience ordering food online. In doing so, the study included a screening question in the questionnaire by asking the respondents about frequency of online food delivery order. At the same time the study selected target respondents who live in Phnom Penh city only. This is due to the fact that Phnom Penh has the highest population density in Cambodia and traffic and parking issues have given option for the people to order food from online food delivery service. Finally, the study employed purposive sampling by selecting those respondents who experienced ordering from online food delivery service.

In this study, researcher used a survey questionnaire, designed in Google Form as a tool for gathering data. The questionnaire was designed into four sections, namely screening, personal information, measurement of constructs, and comments seeking. The first section screened whether the respondent was eligible to participate in the survey. The second section focused on personal information such gender, age, educational background, occupation, and income level. The third section was the rating scale which focused on the measurement of each construct. The study utilized constructs from previous research to measure each variable. Specifically, it adopted performance expectancy and effort expectancy from Alalwan (2020), social influence from Ren et al. (2020), facilitating conditions and habit from Venkatesh et al. (2012), hedonic motivation and price value from Yeo et al. (2017), trust from Zhu et al. (2017), customer satisfaction from Carvalho et al. (2020), and repurchase intention from Wang and Chu (2020). Five-point Likert scale was used in order to rate each item. The five-point scale includes 1 as strongly disagree, 2 as disagree, 3 as neutral, 4 as agree, and 5 as strongly agree (Armstrong, 1987). The final section seeks comments and suggestions from the respondents on online food delivery service.

After the survey questionnaire was designed in Google Form, the study turned it into the link or QR Code, which was distributed to respondents through social media platforms such as Facebook, Telegram, and others. The study selected the respondents based on demographic factors such as gender, age, occupation, and especially those who experienced in ordering food from online food delivery service. After 400 respondents filled in the survey questionnaire, the data set was automatically stored in the Google Form. The study then exported those data as an excel file and imported it into the statistical software for running the analysis. First of all, the researcher, with raw data obtained, generated the table of frequency and percentage regarding the demographic characteristic of the respondents. After that, the study employed a descriptive statistic to analyze the agreement level which measure the questions of each factor. Next, the researcher analyzed the Cronbach's coefficient to ensure the reliability of measurement items were met; and the researcher used Pearson correlation matrix in order to measure the association of each variable. Finally, the researcher ran the path analysis of multiple regression.

RESULTS

In order to respond to the research objective, the survey link was sent to target respondents for one month from June 2023 to August 2023; Among 600 respondents who experienced ordering food from an online food delivery service, only 450 responded to the link. After going through data screening, 400 cases were analyzed by focusing on demographics, level of agreement, Cronbach Alpha, correlation coefficient, and multiple regression.

Table 1. Frequency of ordering and Demographic of the Respondents

Demographic	Category (n=400)	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	172	43.00%
	Female	228	57.00%
	Total	400	100.00%
Age	Between 15 to 24 years old	63	15.75%
	Between 25 to 34 years old	301	75.25%
	Between 35 to 44 years old	34	8.50%
	Equal or over 55 years old	2	0.50%
	Total	400	100.00%
Occupational Status	Currently unemployed	33	8.25%
	Business owner	22	5.50%
	Government officer	59	14.75%
	Private/company employees	262	65.50%
	Other	24	6.00%
	Total	400	100.00%
Frequency of ordering	Every day	66	16.50%
	Two to three times a week	162	40.50%
	Once a week	73	18.25%
	Twice a month	44	11.00%
	Once a month	35	8.75%
	Twice a year	11	2.75%
	Once a year	9	2.25%
	Total	400	100.00%
Brand	E-Gets	52	13.00%
	Foodpanda	163	40.75%
	Grab	17	4.25%
	KOI The Cambodia	1	0.25%
	NHAM24	86	21.50%
	The Pizza Company	6	1.50%
	Wingmall	10	2.50%
	WOWNOW	65	16.25%
	Total	400	100.00%
Spending on ordering food per time	Less than 2 USD	3	0.75%%
	2 USD – 5 USD	214	53.50%
	6 USD – 9 USD	105	26.25%
	10 USD – 13 USD	54	13.50%
	14 USD – 17 USD	13	3.35%
	18 USD – 21 USD	4	1.00%
	Over 22 USD	7	1.75%
	Total	400	100.00%

Multiple Regression Analysis

The study employed multiple regression analysis to investigate the linear relationship between several independent variables and a single dependent variable. In the first block, customer satisfaction (CS) was designated as the outcome variable, with eight predictors grouped together: performance expectancy (PE), effort expectancy (EE), social influence (SI), facilitating conditions (FC), hedonic motivation (HM), price value (PV), habit (HA), and trust (T). In the second block, the analysis was conducted with customer satisfaction as the predictor and repurchase intention (REINT) as the outcome variable.

Multiple Regression Analysis (customer satisfaction as an outcome)

The study employed the F statistic to assess the overall fitness of the model. The model is assumed to be significant if the p-value of the F statistic is smaller than 0.05. In doing so, the study assigned repurchase intention (REINT) as the outcome, and a group of nine variables such as performance expectancy (PE), effort expectancy (EE), social influence (SI), facilitating condition (FC), hedonic motivation (HM), price value (PV), habit (HA), trust (TR), customer satisfaction (CS) as the predictors.

Table 2 illustrated the result of the model summary when customer satisfaction (CS) was assigned as the outcome of the eight predictors. The table showed that the R squared was 0.548 and Adjusted R Square was 0.538. Therefore, 54.8 percent of the variability in the dependent variable (customer satisfaction) was explained by the regression model. The table also shows multiple regression analysis when customer satisfaction (CS) was assigned as the dependent variable and performance expectancy (PE), effort expectancy (EE), social influence (SI), facilitating condition (FC), hedonic motivation (HM), price value (PV), habit (HA), and trust (TR) were assigned as the predictors.

Table 2. Multiple regression analysis for Customer Satisfaction as the outcome

Predictors	**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**t**	**Sig.**
	B	**Std. Error**		
(Constant)	1.342	0.134	10.032	0.000**
PE	0.194	0.042	4.685	0.000**
EE	0.409	0.045	9.024	0.000**
SI	0.035	0.029	1.208	0.228
FC	-0.001	0.028	-0.052	0.959
HM	0.001	0.023	0.031	0.976
PV	-0.072	0.029	-2.455	0.015*
HA	0.016	0.024	0.671	0.503
TR	0.079	0.025	3.141	0.002*

Notes: R2= 0.548, Adjusted R Square = 0.538, F value = 51.005, sig. 0.000**
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed)

According to the table, the p-value of 0.000 indicates a statistically significant relationship between performance expectancy and customer satisfaction. First, with a significant positive coefficient (B = 0.194, p = 0.000 < 0.05), there is a clear statistically significant positive relationship between performance expectancy and customer satisfaction. Thus, H_1 was valid.

Second, the strong positive coefficient (B = 0.409, p = 0.000) demonstrates a robust and highly significant positive relationship between effort expectancy and customer satisfaction, indicating that effort expectancy directly influences customer satisfaction; thus, H_2 was valid.

Third, the very low coefficient (B = 0.035) and high p-value (p = 0.228), which exceeds 0.05, indicate no significant positive relationship between social influence and customer satisfaction. Customers' satisfaction with online food delivery is influenced by factors other than recommendations from friends or family, leading to the rejection of H_3.

Fourth, the negative coefficient (B = -0.001) and high p-value (p = 0.959 > 0.05) suggest there is no significant positive relationship between facilitating conditions and customer satisfaction. Customers' satisfaction is influenced by factors unrelated to the resources necessary to support their purchasing behavior, resulting in the rejection of H_4.

Fifth, the very low (B = 0.001) and high p-value ($p = 0.976 > 0.05$) further indicate no significant positive relationship between hedonic motivation and customer satisfaction, meaning that customers' satisfaction does not stem from their enjoyment of the purchasing process; therefore, H_5 was not supported.

Sixth, the negative coefficient (-0.072) and p-value ($p = 0.015 < 0.05$) suggest an inverse relationship between price value and customer satisfaction, indicating that as price value decreases, customer satisfaction tends to increase, thus validating H_6.

Seventh, the very low coefficient (B = 0.016) and high p-value (p = 0.503) show no significant positive relationship between habit and customer satisfaction, suggesting that customer satisfaction is influenced by factors other than purchasing habits, leading to the rejection of H_7.

Finally, the positive coefficient (B = 0.079) and low p-value ($p = 0.002 < 0.05$) indicate a significant positive relationship between trust and customer satisfaction, signifying that trust directly influences customer satisfaction. When customers trust an online food delivery service, they are more likely to be satisfied with their experience, thus validating H_8.

Multiple Regression Analysis (repurchase intention as an outcome)

Table 3 presents the results of the simple regression analysis between the independent variable, customer satisfaction (CS), and the dependent variable, repurchase intention (REINT), in the context of online food delivery services (OFDS). The findings indicate that customer satisfaction (CS) is statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Customer satisfaction positively and significantly influences repurchase intention, with a coefficient of B = 0.635. This indicates that a one-unit increase in customer satisfaction results in a 63.50% increase in repurchase intention for the online food delivery service (OFDS). Consequently, H_9 is supported.

Table 3. Simple regression analysis for Repurchase Intention as the outcome

Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients		t.	Sig.
	B	Std. Error		
(Constant)	1.245	0.307	4.052	0.000**
CS	0.635	0.076	8.406	0.000**

Notes: R2= 0.533, Adjusted R Square = 0.524. F value = 70.657, sig. 0.000**
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed)

Table 4 shows the direct, indirect and total effect of the eight predictors on repurchase intention through customer satisfaction. Based on the table, the highest effect was between customer satisfaction and repurchase intention with the coefficient B = 0.635, followed by effort expectancy and performance expectancy with B = 0.26 and B = 0.123 respectively. Overall, the results show that performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and trust are the main drivers of customer satisfaction, which in turn significantly impacts repurchase intention. Facilitating condition and price value negatively influence satisfaction, while hedonic motivation and habit show minimal effects.

Table 4. Direct and Indirect effect

Predictors	Direct Effect Coefficients (B)		Indirect Effect Coefficients (B)		Total Effect Coefficients (B)
	CS	REINT	CS	REINT	REINT
PE	0.194	0.000	0.000	0.123	0.123
EE	0.409	0.000	0.000	0.26	0.26
SI	0.035	0.000	0.000	0.022	0.022
FC	-0.001	0.000	0.000	-0.001	-0.001

Table 4. (Cont.)

Predictors	Direct Effect Coefficients (B)		Indirect Effect Coefficients (B)		Total Effect Coefficients (B)
	CS	REINT	CS	REINT	REINT
HM	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
PV	-0.072	0.000	0.000	-0.046	-0.046
HA	0.016	0.000	0.000	0.01	0.01
TR	0.079	0.000	0.000	0.05	0.05
CS	0.000	0.635	0.000	0.000	0.635

Summary of the Hypothesis Testing

The following table shows the summary of results of the hypothesis testing. According to the multiple regression analysis, the impact of performance expectancy, effort expectancy, price value, and trust on customer satisfaction with online food delivery service were supported as the p- value was smaller than 0.05 (p-value < 0.05). However, the effect of social influence, facilitating condition, hedonic motivation, and habit were not supported because the p-value was higher than 0.05 (p-value > 0.05).

Table 5. Results of the hypothesis testing

Hypotheses		Sig.	Result
H_1	Performance expectancy affects customer satisfaction.	0.000**	Supported
H_2	Effort expectancy affects customer satisfaction.	0.000**	Supported
H_3	Social influence affects customer satisfaction.	0.228	Not Supported
H_4	Facilitating conditions affect customer satisfaction.	0.959	Not Supported
H_5	Hedonic motivation affects customer satisfaction.	0.976	Not Supported
H_6	Price value affects customer satisfaction.	0.015*	Supported
H_7	Habits affects customer satisfaction.	0.503	Not Supported
H_8	Trust affects customer satisfaction.	0.002*	Supported
H_9	Customer satisfaction affects repurchase intention.	0.000**	Supported

* $p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.001$

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study aimed to investigate the factors influencing customer satisfaction and repurchase intention in the context of online food delivery services (OFDS) in Phnom Penh city. The findings are discussed in light of previous research, highlighting the implications of the supported and unsupported hypotheses.

First, regarding performance expectancy and customer satisfaction, the results indicate that performance expectancy has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction (B = 0.194, p = 0.000). This finding aligns with Alalwan (2020), confirming that when customers perceive high performance in terms of service quality, timely delivery, and food quality, they are likely to be more satisfied. The 19.4% impact suggests that enhancing performance factors should be a priority for OFDS providers in order to improve customer satisfaction. This has shown that high performance in these key areas not only meets but often exceeds customer expectations, leading to a stronger emotional connection with the service. As customers experience higher levels of satisfaction, they are more likely to develop loyalty, recommend the service to others, and continue using the platform in the future. Therefore, focusing on optimizing service quality, ensuring timely deliveries, and maintaining high food quality are crucial strategies for increasing customer retention and building a competitive advantage in the OFDS market.

Second, the effort expectancy also significantly influences customer satisfaction (B = 0.409, p = 0.000). This result, consistent with Amin et al. (2014), Kaewkitipong et al. (2016), and Zhou (2011), underscores the importance of a user-friendly interface and straightforward ordering process. The strong effect size of 40.9% indicates that companies should focus on simplifying the user experience to further enhance customer satisfaction. When customers find the ordering process easy and intuitive, they are more likely to feel confident and satisfied with their experience, leading to increased usability and reduced frustration. A seamless and hassle-free experience minimizes the effort required to place an order, which in turn enhances customer perceptions of service quality and convenience. In a competitive market, simplifying the user interface can lead to higher customer retention, repeat usage, and positive word-of-mouth, all of which contribute to sustained business success.

Third, contrary to expectations, social influence did not show a significant relationship with customer satisfaction (B = 0.035, p = 0.228), which contrasts with the findings of Hsiao et al. (2016). This may reflect the unique market dynamics in Phnom Penh, where consumers tend to rely more on their preferences and experiences rather than recommendations from friends or family. This suggests that businesses should focus on individual customer preferences rather than social influence in their marketing strategies. By doing such, companies can better tailor their offerings to meet the specific needs and desires of their target audience, leading to higher customer satisfaction and loyalty in a market where personal experience is a stronger driver of purchasing decisions than external social pressures.

Fourth, facilitating conditions also failed to significantly influence customer satisfaction (B = -0.001, p = 0.959), diverging from Chan et al. (2010) and Maillet et al. (2015). The proliferation of online food delivery platforms in Phnom Penh has made the ordering process accessible and convenient, indicating that customers are less reliant on external facilitating conditions, such as prior knowledge or resources. This suggests that the technological infrastructure and widespread availability of platforms have become so integrated into everyday life that they no longer represent a barrier to service use. Customers in Phnom Penh may now take for granted the ease of accessing these platforms through smartphones or websites, reducing the need for prior knowledge or additional resources such as technical skills or support. As a result, factors like ease of access, intuitive design, and seamless functionality are more important than external facilitating conditions in shaping customer satisfaction. This shift highlights the importance of focusing on the user experience itself rather than external aids or conditions that may have been more relevant in earlier stages of market development.

Fifth, hedonic motivation did not demonstrate a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction (B = 0.001, p = 0.976). This result diverges from previous research by Alalwan (2020), Hsiao et al. (2016), and Iyer et al. (2018), indicating that the primary drivers of online food orders in Phnom Penh are likely practicality and convenience rather than enjoyment or pleasure. This is particularly relevant given the busy lifestyles of the respondents, who are primarily employed in private companies. According to this, customers may prioritize the functional aspects of the service—such as saving time, getting food quickly, and minimizing effort—over the emotional or pleasurable experience of ordering food. The fast-paced nature of urban life in Phnom Penh likely leads consumers to value convenience and efficiency more than hedonic factors like enjoyment or indulgence. As a result, businesses in the online food delivery service (OFDS) sector may find greater success by emphasizing speed, reliability, and ease of use, rather than focusing on creating a “fun” or purely pleasure-driven experience.

Sixth, the study found a negative impact of price value on customer satisfaction (B = -0.072, p = 0.015). While it aligns with Lin et al. (2011), it presents an inverse relationship, suggesting that higher prices may detract from customer satisfaction. This finding is particularly important in a competitive market where pricing strategies can significantly impact consumer perceptions. Companies may need to reevaluate their pricing structures to ensure perceived value aligns with customer expectations. Customers in the online food delivery service (OFDS) market may be highly sensitive to price, especially when alternatives are readily available. If customers perceive that the price does not align with the perceived value of the service—such as food quality, delivery speed, or convenience—they may feel dissatisfied, even if the service meets their expectations in other areas. In a market where cost-conscious consumers compare services based on value for money, businesses may need to reevaluate their pricing structures to ensure that the value customers receive justifies the price they pay. Companies that successfully align prices with perceived quality and customer expectations will likely see higher levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Seventh, the study also found no significant effect of habit on customer satisfaction (B = 0.016, p = 0.503), which contrasts with Wang and Lin (2021). This finding suggests that in the rapidly evolving OFDS market, factors beyond habitual purchasing behavior—such as variety and promotions—play a more crucial role in shaping customer satisfaction. As the online food delivery service market continues to grow and diversify, consumers may be more influenced by new offerings, special deals, or unique experiences rather than simply repeating past behaviors. This trend reflects a shift in consumer expectations, where the novelty of different menu items, promotions, or discounts can create more excitement and engagement than relying on habitual choices. Given this, businesses may need to focus on offering a wide variety of options and attractive promotions to capture customer interest and drive repeat business, rather than depending solely on repeat purchases driven by established habits.

Eighth, trust significantly influences customer satisfaction (B = 0.079, p = 0.002), consistent with Uzir et al. (2021) and Zulkarnain et al. (2015). The positive relationship indicates that customers who trust the online food delivery service are more likely to be satisfied with their experience. Thus, building trust through transparent practices and reliable service is essential for OFDS providers aiming to enhance customer satisfaction. When customers trust that their food will be delivered on time, in good condition, and as ordered, they are more likely to feel confident in the service and view it as reliable. Trust also fosters a sense of security, particularly in online transactions where customers are sharing personal information and making payments. Thus, building trust through transparent practices, consistent communication, and a reliable service is essential for OFDS providers aiming to enhance customer satisfaction. Establishing trust not only improves customer loyalty but also encourages positive word-of-mouth, which can be a powerful driver of new customer acquisition.

Finally, the study confirms that customer satisfaction positively impacts repurchase intention (B = 0.635, p = 0.000), in line with the findings of Lin and Lekhawipat (2014), Cha and Lee (2021), and Gilitwala and Nag (2019). The substantial effect size of 63.5% emphasizes the critical role of customer satisfaction in driving repeat purchases. This indicates that enhancing customer satisfaction can lead to increased loyalty and sustained business growth in the OFDS market. Satisfied customers are more likely to return because their expectations have been met or exceeded, reinforcing their trust in the service. When customers have a positive experience—whether in terms of food quality, timely delivery, or user experience—they are more likely to form a habit of using the service again. Furthermore, satisfied customers are often more willing to pay a premium or remain loyal to a brand even in the face of competition, making them more likely to repurchase. Therefore, businesses that focus on delivering high-quality, reliable experiences can foster long-term relationships with customers, ultimately driving growth through repeat purchases and customer retention.

Theorical Implications

This study contributes to the literature on online food delivery services (OFDS) by providing insights into the key factors that influence repurchase intention in the context of Phnom Penh. The findings confirm the relevance of the UTAUT-2 framework while also suggesting modifications to its applicability in the OFDS sector. The study highlights the critical roles of performance expectancy, effort expectancy, and trust in shaping customer satisfaction, which in turn significantly drives repurchase intention. The results also indicate that the conventional constructs of hedonic motivation and price value do not have a meaningful impact on customer satisfaction in this context, suggesting that these factors may be less influential in utility-driven services like OFDS.

Moreover, the research underscores the need to adjust the conceptual relationships within the UTAUT-2 model by reclassifying social influence, facilitating conditions, and habit as direct predictors of repurchase intention rather than mediating factors through customer satisfaction. This adjustment provides a refined understanding of how consumers' behavioral intentions are shaped in the OFDS context, where convenience and external social factors may bypass satisfaction and directly impact repurchase decisions. Thus, these findings offer a basis for future research to revisit and adapt the UTAUT-2 model in similar service-based digital platforms to better capture the dynamics of consumer behavior.

Managerial Implications

This study reveals that performance expectancy significantly affects customer satisfaction, businesses should ensure that their online food delivery services meet or exceed customer expectations regarding service reliability, quality of food, and delivery time. Enhancing performance can lead to higher customer satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, the significant impact of effort expectancy on customer satisfaction indicates that streamlining the ordering process and making it user-friendly can significantly enhance customer experiences. Companies should invest in improving their app interface and reducing barriers to ordering, thus facilitating easier access to their services.

Furthermore, the finding that price value affects customer satisfaction suggests that customers are sensitive to pricing. Businesses must strike a balance between offering competitive pricing and maintaining high service quality. Regularly evaluating pricing strategies and offering value-for-money promotions can enhance customer satisfaction. Especially, trust has a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction. Therefore, businesses should prioritize building trust through transparent communication, reliable service delivery, and ensuring food safety. This could involve showcasing customer testimonials, certifications, and clear return policies.

Finally, the strong relationship between customer satisfaction and repurchase intention indicates that companies focusing on improving customer satisfaction can expect a significant increase in repeat orders. Thus, companies providing online food delivery service should implement customer feedback mechanisms to continuously improve services based on customer needs and preferences.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES

The study's reliance on a sample size of 400 respondents may limit the generalizability of the findings. A larger and more diverse sample could enhance the robustness of the conclusions. Future researchers should consider a broader demographic spectrum and include participants from various socio-economic backgrounds to capture a more comprehensive perspective.

Focusing exclusively on consumer satisfaction and repurchase intentions in Phnom Penh may restrict the external validity of the study. It is essential for future research to encompass a wider geographical scope, incorporating diverse regions such as Preah Sihanoukville and Siem Reap, to account for potential regional variations in consumer preferences and behaviors.

Complementing quantitative findings with qualitative methods can uncover deeper insights into factors that may not have emerged in the current study. Conducting in-depth interviews or focus group discussions can yield a richer understanding of customer perceptions, preferences, and experiences, contributing to a more comprehensive model.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to my family, my advisor, and Panyapiwat Institute of Management (PIM) for providing me with the opportunity and encouraging me to complete this research paper.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest found in this research.

REFERENCES

Al-Gahtani, S. S., Hubona, G. S., & Wang, J. (2007). Information technology (IT) in Saudi Arabia: Culture and the acceptance and use of IT. *Information & Management*, *44*(8), 681–691. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2007.09.002

Alalwan, A. A. (2020). Mobile food ordering apps: An empirical study of the factors affecting customer e-satisfaction and continued intention to reuse. *International Journal of Information Management*, *50*, 28–44. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2019.04.008

Amin, M., Rezaei, S., & Abolghasemi, M. (2014). User satisfaction with mobile websites: the impact of perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEOU) and trust. *Nankai Business Review International, 5*(3), 258-274. https://doi.org/10.1108/NBRI-01-2014-0005

Armstrong, R. L. (1987). The midpoint on a five-point likert-type scale. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, *64*(2), 359–362. https://doi.org/10.2466/pms.1987.64.2.359

Brown, S. A., & Venkatesh, V. (2005). A model of adoption of technology in the household: A baseline model test and extension incorporating household life cycle. *Management Information Systems Quarterly*, *29*(3), 11. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/25148690

Carvalho, H., Saldanha, E., & Amaral, A. (2020). The mediation effects of customer satisfaction on the relations between product price, service quality and purchasing decision. *Timor Leste Journal of Business and Management, 2*(2), 14-26. https://doi.org/10.51703/bm.v2i2.18

Cha, S. S., & Lee, S. H. (2021). The effects of user experience factors on satisfaction and repurchase intention at online food market. *The Journal of Industrial Distribution & Business, 12*(4), 7–13. https://doi.org/10.13106/jidb.2021.vol12.no4.7

Chan, F. K. Y., Thong, J. Y. L., Venkatesh, V., Brown, S. A., Hu, P. J. H., & Tam, K. Y. (2010). Modeling citizen satisfaction with mandatory adoption of an e-government technology. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, *11*(10), 519–549. https://doi.org/10.17705/1jais.00239

Chenarides, L., Grebitus, C., Lusk, J. L., Printezis, I., & Carey, W. P. (2020). Food consumption behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Agribusiness*, *37*. https://doi.org/10.1002/agr.21679

Chiu, C. M., Chang, C. C., Cheng, H. L., & Fang, Y. H. (2009). Determinants of customer repurchase intention in online shopping. *Online Information Review*, *33*(4), 761–784. https://doi.org/10.1108/14684520910985710

Deng, Z., Mo, X., & Liu, S. (2014). Comparison of the middle-aged and older users' adoption of mobile health services in China. *International Journal of Medical Informatics*, *83*(3), 210–224. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijmedinf.2013.12.002

Dodds, W. B., Monroe, K. B., & Grewal, D. (1991). Effects of price, brand, and store information on buyers' product evaluations. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *28*(3), 307–319. https://doi.org/10.2307/3172866

Duyck, P., Pynoo, B., Devolder, P., Voet, T., Adang, L., Ovaere, D., & Vercruysse, J. (2010). Monitoring the PACS implementation process in a large university hospital—discrepancies between radiologists and physicians. *Journal of Digital Imaging*, *23*, 73–80. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10278-008-9163-7

Gilitwala, B., & Nag, A. K. (2019). A study of factors influencing repurchase intention of online food delivery in Bangkok, Thailand. *International Journal on Emerging Technologies*, *10*(3), 193–201.

Gruen, T. W., Osmonbekov, T., & Czaplewski, A. J. (2006). eWOM: The impact of customer-to-customer online know-how exchange on customer value and loyalty. *Journal of Business Research*, *59*(4), 449–456. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2005.10.004

Gunden, N., Morosan, C., & DeFranco, A. (2020). Consumers' intentions to use online food delivery systems in the USA. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *32*(3), 1325–1345. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-06-2019-0595

Hellier, P. K., Geursen, G. M., Carr, R. A., & Rickard, J. A. (2003). Customer repurchase intention: A general structural equation model. *European Journal of Marketing*, *37*(11/12), 1762–1800. https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560310495456

Hsiao, C.-H., Chang, J.-J., & Tang, K.-Y. (2016). Exploring the influential factors in continuance usage of mobile social Apps: Satisfaction, habit, and customer value perspectives. *Telematics and Informatics*, *33*(2), 342–355. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2015.08.014

Iyer, P., Davari, A., & Mukherjee, A. (2018). Investigating the effectiveness of retailers' mobile applications in determining customer satisfaction and repatronage intentions? A congruency perspective. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *44*, 235–243. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2018.07.017

Jasperson, 'Jon, Carter, P. E., & Zmud, R. W. (2005). A comprehensive conceptualization of post-adoptive behaviors associated with information technology enabled work systems. *MIS Quarterly*, 525–557. https://doi.org/10.2307/25148694

Kaewkitipong, L., Chen, C. C., & Ractham, P. (2016). Using social media to enrich information systems field trip experiences: Students' satisfaction and continuance intentions. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *63*, 256–263. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.05.030

Kemp, S. (2022). *Digital 2022: Global Overview Report. https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-global-overview-report*

Kim, M. J., Chung, N., & Lee, C. K. (2011). The effect of perceived trust on electronic commerce: Shopping online for tourism products and services in South Korea. *Tourism Management*, *32*(2), 256–265. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2010.01.011

Limayem, M., Hirt, S. G., & Cheung, C. M. K. (2007). How habit limits the predictive power of intention: The case of information systems continuance. *MIS Quarterly*, 705–737. https://doi.org/10.2307/25148817

Lim, W. M., & Rasul, T. (2022). Customer engagement and social media: Revisiting the past to inform the future. *Journal of Business Research, 148*, 325-342. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.04.068

Lin, C.-C., Wu, H.-Y., & Chang, Y.-F. (2011). The critical factors impact on online customer satisfaction. *Procedia Computer Science*, *3*, 276–281. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2010.12.047

Lin, C., & Lekhawipat, W. (2014). Factors affecting online repurchase intention. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 114(4), 597-611. https://doi.org/10.1108/IMDS-10-2013-0432

Mahande, R. D., & Malago, J. D. (2019). An e-learning acceptance evaluation through UTAUT model in a postgraduate program. *Journal of Educators Online*, *16*(2), n2. https://doi.org/10.9743/JEO.2019.16.2.7

Maillet, É., Mathieu, L., & Sicotte, C. (2015). Modeling factors explaining the acceptance, actual use and satisfaction of nurses using an Electronic Patient Record in acute care settings: An extension of the UTAUT. *International Journal of Medical Informatics*, *84*(1), 36–47. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijmedinf.2014.09.004

Muangmee, C., Kot, S., Meekaewkunchorn, N., Kassakorn, N., & Khalid, B. (2021). Factors determining the behavioral intention of using food delivery apps during covid-19 pandemics. *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research*, *16*(5), 1297–1310. https://doi.org/10.3390/jtaer16050073

Nordhoff, S., Louw, T., Innamaa, S., Lehtonen, E., Beuster, A., Torrao, G., Bjorvatn, A., Kessel, T., Malin, F., Happee, R., & others. (2020). Using the UTAUT2 model to explain public acceptance of conditionally automated (L3) cars: A questionnaire study among 9,118 car drivers from eight European countries. *Transportation Research Part F: Traffic Psychology and Behaviour*, *74*, 280–297. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trf.2020.07.015

Raman, A., Don, Y., Khalid, R., & Rizuan, M. (2014). Usage of learning management system (Moodle) among postgraduate students: UTAUT model. *Asian Social Science*, *10*(14), 186–192. https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v10n14p186

Ramos, K. (2022). Factors influencing customers' continuance usage intention of food delivery apps during COVID-19 quarantine in Mexico. *British Food Journal*, *124*(3), 833–852. https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-12-2022-1141

Rasli, M. A. M., Zulkefli, N. H., Salleh, N. S. A., Ghani, F. A., Razali, N. A., & Idris, R. S. N. R. (2020). Determinants of behavioural intention on online food delivery (OFD) apps: extending utaut2 with information quality. *Global Business & Management Research*, *12*(4), 679-689.

Ren, S., Kwon, S. D., & Cho, W. S. (2020). Online Food Delivery (OFD) services in Cambodia: A study of the factors influencing consumers' behavioral intentions to use. *ResearchGate*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349552360_Online_Food_Delivery_OFD_services_in_Cambodia_A_study_of_the_factors_influencing_consumers'_behavioral_intentions_to_use

Schiffman, L. G., & Kanuk, L. L. (2004). *Consumer Behaviour* (8th edition). Prentice Hall.

Statista. (n.d.). *Online Food Delivery - Cambodia. https://www.statista.com/outlook/dmo/online-food-delivery/cambodia*.

Uzir, M. U. H., Al Halbusi, H., Thurasamy, R., Hock, R. L. T., Aljaberi, M. A., Hasan, N., & Hamid, M. (2021). The effects of service quality, perceived value and trust in home delivery service personnel on customer satisfaction: Evidence from a developing country. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *63*, 102721. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102721

Venkatesh, V., Morris, M. G., Davis, G. B., & Davis, F. D. (2003). User acceptance of information technology: Toward a unified view. *MIS Quarterly*, 425–478. https://doi.org/10.2307/30036540

Venkatesh, V., Thong, J. Y. L., & Xu, X. (2012). Consumer acceptance and use of information technology: extending the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology. *MIS Quarterly*, 157–178. https://doi.org/10.2307/41410412

Verkasalo, H., López-Nicolás, C., Molina-Castillo, F. J., & Bouwman, H. (2010). Analysis of users and non-users of smartphone applications. *Telematics and Informatics*, *27*(3), 242–255. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2009.11.001

Wang, E. S.-T., & Chu, Y.-H. (2020). Influence of consumer's long-term orientation and safety consciousness on intention to repurchase certified functional foods. *Journal of Food Products Marketing*, *26*(4), 247–261. https://doi.org/10.1080/10454446.2020.1757554

Wang, Y.-T., & Lin, K.-Y. (2021). Understanding continuance usage of mobile learning applications: The moderating role of habit. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *12*, 736051. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.736051

Yamane, T. (1967). *Statistics: An Introductory Analysis* (2nd Edition). Harper and Row.

Yeo, V. C. S., Goh, S.-K., & Rezaei, S. (2017). Consumer experiences, attitude and behavioral intention toward online food delivery (OFD) services. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *35*, 150–162. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2016.12.013

Yoon, S.-J. (2002). The antecedents and consequences of trust in online-purchase decisions. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, *16*(2), 47–63. https://doi.org/10.1002/dir.10008

Zhou, T. (2011). An empirical examination of initial trust in mobile banking. *Internet Research, 21*(5), 527-540. https://doi.org/10.1108/10662241111176353

Zhu, Q., Feng, Y., & Choi, S. (2017). The role of customer relational governance in environmental and economic performance improvement through green supply chain management. *Journal of Cleaner Production, 155*(2), 46-53. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2016.02.124

Zulkarnain, K., Ahasanul, H., Selim, A., & others. (2015). Key success factors of online food ordering services: An empirical study. *Malaysian Institute of Management*, *50*(2), 19–36.

FACTORS INFLUENCING USERS' INTENTION TO ADOPT TIKTOK THROUGH USER SATISFACTION IN PHNOM PENH CITY

Vichhay Sour[a*], Sunida Piriyapada[b]

[a b] International College, Panyapiwat Institute of Management, Nonthaburi, Thailand
*Corresponding author's e-mail: 6471104171@stu.pim.ac.th

Received: 13 February 2024 / Revised: 31 October 2024 / Accepted: 13 November 2024

ABSTRACT

Purpose – The purpose of this research was to identify the factors influencing intention to adopt TikTok through user satisfaction by integrating three other variables, namely content richness, flow state, and personal innovativeness, into the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM).
Methodology – The research uses a correlational study of the quantitative method by conducting a survey with 400 respondents who were experiencing using TikTok in Phnom Penh City. This research applied a survey design using quantitative methods. The study uses a questionnaire developed from the measurement of constructs and employs this tool to collect data from TikTok users online.
Results – Most of the TikTok users participating in this research were female whose age bracket ranged mainly between 25 to 29 years old. These users mainly worked for private or company employees. Moreover, a large majority of TikTok adopters used it every day from 31 minutes to 60 minutes at night time, and most of them used TikTok in order to watch content videos shared by others. After conducting hypothesis testing by using the multiple regression analysis, the research found that subjective norm and content richness do not significantly influence user satisfaction with TikTok since the p-value is greater than 0.05. This research found that perceived behavioral control, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, flow state, and personal innovativeness have a significant effect on user satisfaction with TikTok.
Implications – In this research, the researcher clarifies the research question by discussing the results with the previous studies; so that the findings of this study become meaningful. Three main subsections are discussed consequently, namely the research model, main variables in the model and the mediating effects
Originality/Value – The research supports that there is the significant effect of user satisfaction on the intention to adopt TikTok.

Keywords: Technology acceptance model, Theory of planned behavior, Content richness, Flow state, Personal innovativeness, User satisfaction

Paper Type: Research Article

INTRODUCTION

Social media, an interactive web application, has gained popularity among adults globally (Zyoud et al., 2018). Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and so forth is used by billions of people around the world (Appel et al., 2020). According to Kemp (2022), there are around 4.62 billion social media users around the world, equivalent to 58.4 percent of the world's total population. Among the social media, TikTok has become one of the most downloaded apps on the App Store (Saxena, 2020). TikTok is a short-video interactive innovative music app. Users of this

Citation:
Sour, V., & Piriyapada, S. (2024). Factors Influencing Users' Intention to Adopt TikTok Through User Satisfaction in Phnom Penh City. RMUTT Global Business Accounting and Finance Review, 8(2), 19-31. https://doi.org/10.60101/gbafr.2024.272297

app can select their music interface, add special beauty and slow-motion effects and then create their favorite video (Zhao et al., 2017). With its personalized feeds of quirky short videos with music and sound, TikTok app has an addictive quality and high levels of engagement in popular topics such as beauty, fashion, personal finance, and cooking (Deborah, 2023). By 2020, TikTok reported having 800 million active monthly users worldwide (Saxena, 2020). In general, TikTok has been used with different purposes. Arslan (2023) raises ten reasons that make TikTok become popular; that is, it brings forth the relevant videos; its content was created by common people for common folk; it is user-friendly; it offers the latest trends; it makes users feel like being part of a community; it offers a lot of tools for creativity; it is one of the best sources for funny content; it has content for all age groups; it introduces new places and cultures; and it is a platform to showcase talent and reach the masses. TikTok is not only useful in a general sense, but it also benefits many businesses. Because of creativity and innovations, TikTok establishes an entirely new level of engagement with the clients who the business is trying to reach. According to Alaniz (2022), TikTok offers major benefits of marketing; for instance, it enhances brand identity, increase brand awareness, enhances authenticity of brand image, reach your target market faster, budget-friendly for business.

Likewise, TikTok is expecting to grow in Thailand since the shoppertainment, which merges shopping and entertainment in order to engage website visitors, market is estimated to USD 12.4 billion by 2025 (Leesa-Nguansuk, 2022). According to a study conducted by Boston Consulting Group (BCG), Thailand ranks fourth out of six markets in Asia-Pacific in terms of gross merchandise value (GMV) in shoppertainment, behind Vietnam, Indonesia, and Australia (Leesa-Nguansuk, 2022). According to MarketingGuru (2021), Thailand Internet users spend an average around 35 minutes a day using TikTok. Not so much difference from Thailand, with the latest data published in January 2023 in Cambodia, the growth rate of TikTok users is 1.21%, which there are around 7.4 million TikTok users. With male users account for around 0.465% and female users account for around 0.535% (OOSGA, 2023). TikTok has gained popularity following the other social media platform such as Facebook and Instagram. TikTokCambodia supports businesses and stores to create and advertise by increasing video viewing, increasing the like-follow, creating sales with product registration, and creating promotional video. Even though TikTok adoption has significantly increased in Cambodia, there is a lack of research looking into user satisfaction and intention. Al-Khasawneh et al. (2022) focus on behavioral factors such as perceived ease of use, and perceived usefulness that influence TikTok adoption. Moreover, Al-Maroof et al. (2021) examine content richness, flow state, and personal innovativeness on TikTok adoption; however, there is still a gap in the integration of these two studies so that factors influencing TikTok adoption can be fully contextualized. More importantly, TikTok, a social media engagement, has changed the young generation's lifestyles, assisted marketers' strategies, and captured policymakers' interests. In order to shed light for the study, this research addresses the following research questions:

- To study the impact of subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, content richness, flow state, and personal innovativeness on TikTok users' satisfaction.
- To investigate the impact of users' satisfaction on the intention to use TikTok.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This part of this independent study focuses on the review of the related studies as well as related theories to the topic. It begins with the overview of definition of TikTok, theoretical framework related to TikTok adoption intention, hypothesis development, and the proposed conceptual model. Built upon the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), TPB attempts to explain how individuals intend to perform a certain task (Ajzen, 1991). There are three main predictors of TPB, namely attitudes, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control, which influence the behavioral intention.

In terms of online shopping, Dani (2017) refers to consumer's attitude as their psychological state in terms of making purchases over the Internet; and subject norm refers to an important person or group of people approve and support a particular behavior (Ham et al., 2015). Moreover, perceived behavioral control is defined as the person's belief that his or her performance of a specific behavior is under his or her control (Ajzen, 1991). According to TPB, the study is more likely to adopt subjective norm and perceived behavioral control as the predictors of intention to adopt TikTok since this social media has become popular because of the social group influence.

Even though TAM is rather old model, it is popular in the context of new technology acceptance such as TikTok. TAM explains the individuals are more likely to adopt a certain system because they view the system as easy to use and usefulness (Davis, 1989). Besides TPB and TAM, another proposed model, which has recently gain popularity, is the acceptance of social media for knowledge acquisition and sharing. According to Al-Maroof et al. (2021), content richness, flow state, and personal innovativeness are also usefulness in predicting the acceptance of social media such TikTok. The study has proposed an indirect effect of the predictors toward the acceptance of TikTok (Al-Maroof et al., 2021).

Acceptance of Social Media and User Satisfaction

User satisfaction, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, content richness, flow state, personal innovativeness, and user intention to adopt platforms like TikTok play interconnected roles in shaping user behavior and engagement. User satisfaction, according to Al-Maroof et al. (2021), is an emotional response reflecting how well users' needs and expectations are met. Higher satisfaction directly correlates with user retention and loyalty, encouraging ongoing engagement and willingness to adopt new features (Liaw, 2008). This satisfaction also contributes to positive word-of-mouth recommendations, which are valuable for platform growth in competitive markets. Furthermore, subjective norms, defined as social pressures that influence user behavior, significantly impact satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Ly & Ly, 2022). These pressures often arise from family, friends, and social networks and have been shown to enhance user motivation to continue engaging with technology (Alnaser et al., 2017). By focusing on these social influences, platforms can better understand users' motivations and tap into the supportive role of peer influence to boost satisfaction.

Perceived behavioral control (PBC), another crucial factor, is defined by Ajzen (1991) as an individual's belief in their ability to perform a behavior, which is split into self-efficacy and resource availability. Self-efficacy refers to a user's confidence in their ability to perform a task, while facilitating conditions relate to the presence of resources necessary to use the technology effectively (Rachbini, 2018). Research by Kim and Park (2005) and Rouibah et al. (2011) has demonstrated that PBC significantly impacts user intention across various digital platforms, including online shopping and mobile banking, where users' beliefs in their capabilities and access to resources can directly influence their satisfaction and sustained use. Another vital factor is perceived usefulness, which is the likelihood that a user believes a specific system will enhance their performance within an organizational or personal context (Gu et al., 2009). Perceived usefulness has a positive effect on behavioral intentions across multiple fields, from e-learning to social media, as users are more willing to adopt technology that provides practical benefits (Tandon et al., 2016; Shah & Attiq, 2016).

Perceived ease of use complements perceived usefulness by ensuring that users feel the technology is straightforward and requires minimal effort to use (Gu et al., 2009). Studies have shown that ease of use fosters satisfaction and encourages adoption, as seen in mobile banking and online education platforms. Content richness, defined by Al-Maroof et al. (2021) as the quality of resources that promote knowledge acquisition, further impacts user satisfaction by enabling meaningful engagement with technology. When content is rich and informative, users are more inclined to accept and adopt the technology (Al-Maroof et al., 2021). Flow state, which involves a sense of control, involvement, and enjoyment, also influences satisfaction by allowing users to experience an immersive and enjoyable interaction, as evidenced by studies on eBank usage and livestreaming services (Pinheiro Cruz, & Muñoz Gallego, 2004; Hsu & Lin, 2021). Personal innovativeness, defined as a user's openness to new technology, plays a final role by fostering the readiness to accept and experiment with emerging technologies (Khan et al., 2019). Together, these factors not only support user satisfaction but also enhance intention, defined by Ajzen

(1985) and Davis (1989) as a user's willingness to continue engagement. Ultimately, platforms like TikTok can leverage these elements—satisfaction, norms, control, usefulness, ease of use, richness, flow, and innovativeness—to build a loyal, engaged user base that is motivated to explore and remain active, driving overall platform growth and competitive advantage.

Based on the above hypotheses, the study proposes the following conceptual model on the study factors influencing TikTok user's Intention.

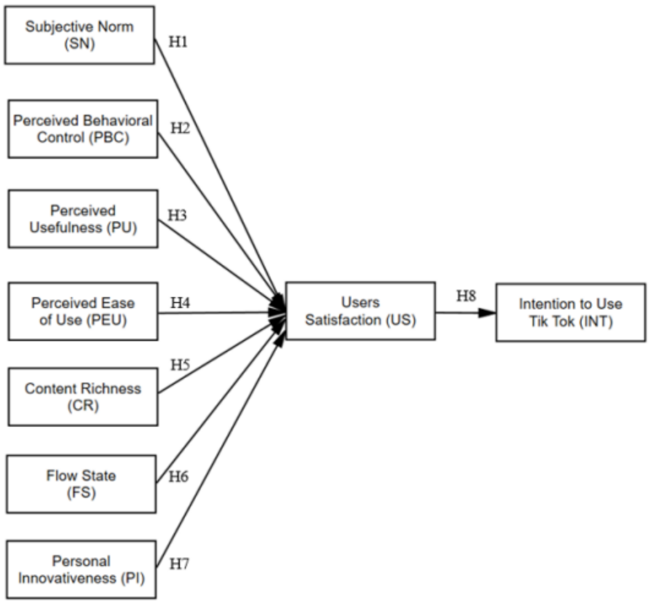


Figure 1. The Proposed Conceptual Model on the study of Intention to adopt TikTok

In order to answer the above research question, the study proposes the following research hypotheses

H_1: Subjective norm affects TikTok users' satisfaction
H_2: Perceived behavioural control effects on TikTok users' satisfaction
H_3: Perceived usefulness affects TikTok users' satisfaction
H_4: Perceived ease of use affects TikTok users' satisfaction
H_5: Content richness affects TikTok users' satisfaction
H_6: Flow state affects TikTok users' satisfaction
H_7: Personal innovativeness affects TikTok users' satisfaction
H_8: User satisfaction affects intention to use TikTok

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research applied a survey design using quantitative methods. The study uses a questionnaire developed from the measurement of constructs and employs this tool to collect data from TikTok users online.

Sampling and Sample Frame

According to MacroTrends (n.d.), there are around 2.28 million of people who are currently living in Phnom Penh City; however, the researcher could not determine how many people in Phnom Penh City actually used TikTok. Therefore, the researcher uses the following formula to calculate the sample size (Cochran, 1977).

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2pq}{e^2}$$

Sample Size Determination Formula

where n_0 = large sample size,

- p = the estimated proportion of the population = 50% = 0.5
- p = e refers to a margin error. Assuming that the "e" margin error was set at 5%
- z = z value at reliability level or significant level at 95% = 1.96
- q = 1 – p
- e = desired level of precision = 5% = 0.05

Therefore, the calculation for the required sample size as follows:

- n_0 => [(1.96)2 x (0.50) x (0.5)] / (0.05)2 = 384.16 equaled to 384. However, to ensure the sample size is valid, the study decided to choose 400 TikTok users as the sample size.

Research Instrument

The study used the questionnaire which was divided into four section. The study used the screening question to check whether the respondents use TikTok or not. The second section focused on personal basic information. Section three focused on the opinions and experiences of the TikTok users so that the research question was answered. In this section, the study adapted the measurement of constructs from various authors; for instance, the study adopted the measurements of user satisfaction from (Ko & Pastore, 2007), subjective norm from (Ly & Ly, 2022), perceived behavioral control from (Norng, 2022), perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, content richness, flow state, and personal innovativeness from (Al-Maroof et al., 2021), and intention from (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). In order to measure them, the study used a 5-point Likert Scale (1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. The study designed section four to seek comments or suggestions from the respondents. Finally, the questionnaire was designed in English and back translation in Khmer.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

The study used primary data. Since this research employed the quantitative study, the researcher used communication as a method for collecting data. The researcher used convenience sampling by approaching TikTok users who were available and snowball sampling by requesting those who had already participated in the survey recommend other users they knew. The 400 respondents who were TikTok users were requested to fill in the questionnaire, which had been designed in google form and were distributed to those TikTok users either through email, Facebook, and other social media. The researcher used multiple regression analysis in order to predict the intention to adopt TikTok through user satisfaction. First of all, the study run multiple regression by assigning the group of predictors, namely subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, content richness, flow state, and personal innovativeness and assigning user satisfaction as the outcome. Finally, the study assigned user satisfaction as the predictor and the intention to adopt TikTok as the outcome.

Validity and Reliability Test

The study employed Cronbach's alpha to assess the reliability of the measurement scale. According to Gliem and Gliem (2003), Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency for a set of scales, with reliability coefficients typically ranging between 0 and 1. Following a widely accepted guideline (George & Mallery, 2003), interpretations of the alpha coefficient are as follows: values below 0.5 are deemed "Unacceptable," those between 0.5 and 0.6 are labeled as "Questionable," the range of 0.6 to 0.7 is considered "Acceptable," 0.7 to 0.8 is classified as "Good," and values exceeding 0.8 are characterized as "Excellent." The Cronbach's alpha values, as depicted in the provided table, range from 0.736 to 0.913. Notably, variables such as intention (0.913), personal innovativeness (0.890), flow state (0.890), user satisfaction (0.874), subjective norm (0.835), perceived behavioral control (0.811), and perceived ease of use (0.803) are classified as having excellent reliability. Additionally, perceived usefulness (0.778) and content richness (0.736) are identified as variables with good reliability. These alpha coefficients indicate the internal consistency and reliability of the respective measurement scales for each variable in the study.

Table 1. Result of Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test (n=30)

No.	Variable	No. of Item	Cronbach Alpha (n=30)
1	User satisfaction (US)	3	0.874
2	Subjective norm (SN)	3	0.835
3	Perceived behavioral control (PBC)	3	0.811
4	Perceived usefulness (PU)	3	0.778
5	Perceived ease of use (PEU)	3	0.803
6	Content richness (CR)	3	0.736
7	Flow state (FS)	3	0.890
8	PI (Personal innovativeness)	3	0.890
9	Intention (INT)	3	0.913

RESULTS

Table 2 displays the personal information of respondents who utilized TikTok in Phnom Penh City. According to the table, 207 (51.75%) were female, while 193 (48.25%) were male. In terms of age, 157 (39.25%) were between the ages of 25 and 29, followed by 37% between the ages of 20 and 24, and 46 (11.50%) between the ages of 30 and 34. Regarding their occupational status, 188 or 47% of them worked in a private company, and the rest of them were currently unemployed (38.25%), business owners (7.75%), government officers (6.50%), and others (0.50%), respectively.

Table 2. Demographic of the Respondents

Demographic	Category (n=400)	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	193	48.25%
	Female	207	51.75%
	Total	400	100%
Age	15-19 years old	16	4%
	20-24 years old	148	37%
	25-29 years old	157	39.25%
	30-34 years old	46	11.50%
	35-39 years old	27	6.75%
	Equal or over 40 years old	6	1.50%
	Total	400	100%
Occupational Status	Currently unemployed	153	38.25%
	Business owner	31	7.75%
	Government officer	26	6.50%
	Private/company employees	188	47%
	Other	2	0.50%
	Total	400	100%

Table 3 shows the usage frequency and the purposes of using TikTok. According to the table, 314 respondents used TikTok every day (78.5%), whereas 60 of them used TikTok two or three times a week (15%). Regarding the time of using, 257 or 64.25% of the respondents used TikTok at night, while 95 or 23.75%% of them used it in the evening, respectively. In terms of usage duration, 125 or 31.25% of respondents used TikTok between 31 and 60 minutes, 106 or 26.50 percent used it for less than 30 minutes, and 42.25 percent used TikTok from 61 to 90 minutes, 91 to 120 minutes, and more than 120 minutes cumulatively. For the purposes of content adoption, 192 respondents, or 48%, used TikTok to watch content videos shared by others, while 14%, or 56 of them, used TikTok to release Relieve stress and tiredness, and 46, or 11.50%, created content videos.

Table 3. Frequency and purposes of using TikTok

Frequency and Purposes	Category (n=400)	Frequency	Percentage
Adoption frequency	Every day	314	78.5%
	Two to three times a week	60	15%
	Once a week	8	2%
	Twice a month	7	1.75%
	Once a month	5	1.25%
	Twice a year	6	1.5%
	Total	400	100%
Adoption time	Morning	13	3.25%
	Afternoon	35	8.75%
	Evening	95	23.75%
	Night time	257	64.25%
	Total	400	100%
Adoption duration	Less than 30 minutes	106	26.50%
	31 minutes to 60 minutes	125	31.25%
	61 Minutes to 90 minutes	77	19.25%
	91 Minutes to 120 minutes	70	17.50%
	More than 120 minutes	22	5.50%
	Total	400	100%
Content adoption	Create content video	46	11.50%
	Share content video	39	9.75%
	Watch content video shared by others	192	48.00%
	Follow the latest trend	18	4.50%
	Advertise products & services	20	5.00%
	Build personal branding	10	2.50%
	Relieve stress and tiredness	56	14.00%
	Sell products and services	4	1.00%
	Entertainment	15	3.75%
	Total	400	100%

Multiple Regression Analysis

A linear regression analysis was performed to analyse the linear relationship between two or more independent variable and one dependent variable. According to Hair et al. (2006), the independent variables are called the predictors and the dependent variable is called the outcome. First, the study performed the multiple regression by grouping predictors, namely subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, content richness, flow state, and personal innovativeness and assigning user satisfaction as the outcome. Then, the study assigned user satisfaction as the predictor and the intention to adopt TikTok as the outcome.

The study used the F statistic to test whether the model was a good fit for the data. If the p-value of the F statistic was less than 0.05, the model was considered to be statistically significant. In order to perform this, the study classified intention to adopt TikTok as the outcome and assigned subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, content richness, flow state, personal innovativeness, and user satisfaction as the predictors.

The study also performed coefficient of determination (R-squared) which is a statistical measure of how well a regression model predicts an outcome. The outcome is represented by the model's dependent variable (Render et al., 2014), the result of the model summary showed that the R squared was 0.589. Therefore, 58.90 percent of the variability in the dependent variable (user satisfaction) was explained by the regression model.

Table 4. Multiple regression analysis

Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	β	**Std. Error**		
(Constant)	1.195	0.172	6.932	0.000**
SN	-0.02	0.031	-0.66	0.510
PBC	0.112	0.033	3.375	0.001*
PU	0.188	0.044	4.285	0.000**
PEU	0.167	0.055	3.024	0.003*
CR	0.064	0.034	1.887	0.060
FS	0.095	0.034	2.775	0.006*
PI	0.201	0.047	4.268	0.000**

Notes: R^2 =0.589, Adjusted R Square =0.582, **p < 0.001, *p < 0.01,
User satisfaction (US) is the dependent variable; SN = subjective norm, PBC = perceived behavioural control, PU = perceived usefulness, PEU = perceived ease of use, CR = content richness, FS = flow state, and PI = personal innovativeness.

Table 5. Summary of the hypothesis results

	Hypotheses	Sig.	Result
H_1:	Subjective norm has a significant impact on TikTok user satisfaction.	0.510	Not Supported
H_2:	Perceived behavioral control has a significant impact on TikTok user satisfaction.	0.001*	Supported
H_3:	Perceived usefulness has a significant impact on TikTok user satisfaction.	0.000**	Supported
H_4:	Perceived ease of use has a significant impact on TikTok user satisfaction.	0.003*	Supported
H_5:	Content richness has a significant impact on TikTok user satisfaction.	0.060	Not Supported
H_6:	Flow state has a significant impact on TikTok user satisfaction.	0.006*	Supported
H_7:	Personal Innovativeness has a significant impact on TikTok user satisfaction	0.000**	Supported
H_8:	User satisfaction has a significant impact on the intention to adopt TikTok.	0.000**	Supported

*p < 0.01, **p < 0.001

The results of the hypothesis testing were shown in the following table. The multiple regression analysis indicates that the impact of perceived behavioural control, perceived usefulness, flow state, and personal innovativeness on user satisfaction with TikTok were all supported at p-value < 0.001, or < 0.01, respectively. Additionally, the impact of user satisfaction on the intention to adopt TikTok was supported since the p-value is smaller than 0.001.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In this section, the researcher brings clarity to the research question by weaving together the study's findings with insights from previous studies, offering a narrative that brings depth and meaning to the results. The discussion unfolds in three main parts: an exploration of the proposed conceptual model, an in-depth look at the primary variables, and an examination of their mediating effects. Beginning with the conceptual model, the study introduces a framework that integrates three additional variables—content richness, flow state, and personal innovativeness—into the established Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). This expanded model aims to shed light on factors driving user satisfaction and the intention to adopt TikTok. The results reveal that the model explains 58.90%

of the variability in user satisfaction and 59.10% of the variability in the intention to adopt TikTok. These figures indicate that introducing these new variables, alongside subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use, significantly strengthens the model, offering a more comprehensive view of user behavior. The alignment of these findings with Al-Maroof et al. (2021) lends further credibility to the model. Delving into subjective norms, the analysis shows a modest effect size ($\beta = -0.02$, $p = 0.510$), suggesting no substantial link between social influence and user satisfaction, contrary to studies by Alnaser et al. (2017) and Elgarhy and Abou-Shouk (2022).

This finding opens a path to consider other elements that may shape user satisfaction with TikTok beyond social pressures. Perceived behavioral control emerges as a significant predictor of satisfaction, with an effect size of $\beta = 0.112$ ($p < 0.01$), suggesting that users feel more satisfied when they are confident in their ability to use TikTok. This finding aligns with Rachbini (2018), highlighting the importance of self-efficacy and the availability of resources in user satisfaction. Similarly, perceived usefulness, with an effect size of $\beta = 0.188$ ($p < 0.001$), reflects that users derive satisfaction from TikTok's utility, consistent with Tandon et al. (2016) and Shah and Attiq (2016). This utility supports users' objectives, such as content consumption, creation, and stress relief. Perceived ease of use also plays a meaningful role, with an effect size of $\beta = 0.167$ ($p < 0.001$). This association is supported by studies like Tandon et al. (2016) and Shah and Attiq (2016), which reveal that ease of use facilitates quick adoption and satisfaction. Users who find TikTok simple to navigate tend to spend between 30 minutes to an hour on the platform, indicating ease of access and engagement. Exploring content richness, the study notes a smaller effect size ($\beta = 0.064$, $p = 0.060$), implying that content quality may not directly impact satisfaction. This finding diverges from Al-Maroof et al. (2021), suggesting that users may value other aspects of TikTok beyond its content offerings. However, flow state, with an effect size of $\beta = 0.095$ ($p < 0.01$), positively impacts satisfaction, indicating that the platform's immersive and enjoyable experience enhances user engagement, a pattern consistent with studies by Pinheiro Cruz and Muñoz Gallego (2004) and Hsu and Lin (2021). Personal innovativeness stands out as a substantial factor, with an effect size of $\beta = 0.201$ ($p < 0.001$). This result, supported by Khan et al. (2019), illustrates that users who are open to new experiences find satisfaction in exploring TikTok. Finally, user satisfaction, with a significant effect size of $\beta = 0.708$ ($p < 0.001$), profoundly influences users' intentions to continue using TikTok, underscoring its role as a bridge between various motivational factors—like perceived usefulness and flow state—and sustained engagement. This narrative of user satisfaction as a core driver highlights its mediating power, revealing the pathway through which TikTok fosters a loyal and engaged user community.

Theoretical Implication

This research presents a nuanced perspective on the factors influencing user satisfaction and adoption intentions on TikTok. While traditional views suggest that family and friends' opinions significantly impact satisfaction with a product, this study reveals no direct effect between subjective norms and user satisfaction on TikTok. These finding challenges existing literature, suggesting that external opinions may not be a primary driver of satisfaction for TikTok users, who may instead be more influenced by individual experiences on the platform. Meanwhile, perceived behavioral control emerged as a key factor, highlighting that users' sense of control over their interactions enhances satisfaction. This insight adds depth to our understanding of user beliefs regarding social media and underscores the importance of user agency in determining satisfaction levels.

The significant impact of perceived usefulness on user satisfaction emphasizes the importance of app features that cater to user preferences. This finding reinforces the role of perceived usefulness in shaping overall satisfaction, providing actionable insights for developers to enhance user experience. Similarly, the positive effect of perceived ease of use on satisfaction points to the critical role of a user-friendly interface. An intuitive, easy-to-navigate design enhances satisfaction, suggesting that platform simplicity and accessibility are fundamental for TikTok's appeal. Interestingly, content richness did not show a significant impact on satisfaction, a result that challenges common assumptions about the role of diverse content. This insight suggests that factors beyond content variety may drive satisfaction, warranting further exploration of elements like personalization and relevance in shaping user experiences. Additionally, the study confirms a positive relationship between flow state and user satisfaction, suggesting that immersive experiences foster user satisfaction. This underscores the importance of facilitating a seamless and engaging experience that keeps users absorbed on the platform. Personal innovativeness also plays a role, as users who are open to exploring new technologies report higher satisfaction. This finding enriches the intersection of individual traits and technology satisfaction, highlighting that innovative users are more likely to embrace and enjoy the platform. Finally, the strong relationship between user satisfaction and adoption intentions underscores satisfaction as a predictor of continued engagement and brand loyalty. High satisfaction levels encourage users to adopt and remain loyal to TikTok, indicating that satisfaction is essential for sustainable platform growth. The study's managerial implications provide actionable insights for TikTok's development and marketing strategies. Managers might de-emphasize social influence strategies, given the lack of impact from subjective norms, and instead focus on personalized features that align with individual preferences. Recognizing the importance of perceived control, managers can enhance features that empower users, such as customization options, to bolster satisfaction. Additionally, focusing on user-friendly interface design and perceived usefulness can improve satisfaction and retention rates. Although content richness was not a significant factor, managers should consider elements like engagement, relevance, and personalization to drive satisfaction. Prioritizing flow state through platform design could further enhance engagement, while targeting innovative users with specialized features could build satisfaction and loyalty among this segment. With satisfaction closely tied to adoption intentions, enhancing user satisfaction should be a focal point in adoption strategies.

In sum, the study's findings offer valuable insights into the dynamics of user satisfaction on TikTok. These theoretical and managerial contributions deepen our understanding of the roles of subjective norms, perceived control, usefulness, ease of use, content, flow state, and personal innovativeness in driving user satisfaction and adoption intentions, providing a foundation for future research and practical strategies in the evolving social media landscape.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES

The study's primary focus on behavioral factors influencing TikTok usage, specifically through user satisfaction, may inadvertently neglect other crucial aspects shaping user behavior on the platform. Future research should consider a more comprehensive exploration of diverse factors contributing to user engagement. The focus of the study on Phnom Penh City limits the applicability of its findings to a wider population. Future research should expand its geographical scope to encompass diverse regions, accounting to potential regional variations in TikTok user behaviors and preferences.

Researchers are urged to complement quantitative analyses with qualitative methods to unearth factors not directly linked to user satisfaction but integral to TikTok usage. Employing in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, or content analysis can provide a more nuanced understanding of user motivations. To enhance external validity, future studies should broaden their sampling beyond Phnom Penh City. Examining TikTok users in various urban areas across Cambodia can offer insights into regional disparities in behavior, preferences, and satisfaction levels.

CONCLUSION

This research attempts to identify the factors influencing intention to adopt TikTok through the user satisfaction. In order to address this objective, the researcher has proposed the conceptual framework by integrating other three variables, namely content richness, flow state, and personal innovativeness into the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). At the same time, the researcher raises two main research questions as a guide to achieve the research objectives:

1. Do subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, content richness, flow state, and personal innovativeness influence TikTok user satisfaction?
2. Does user satisfaction influence the intention to use TikTok?

To fully capture the answer to these research questions, the researcher uses a quantitative method as a blueprint to select sample and collect data. Moreover, the researcher determines 400 respondents as the sample size, based Cochran's formula. In order to collect data from the selected sample, the researcher uses the survey questionnaire, which is structured into four sections with 33 questions. According to the demographic analysis (see Table 2), most of the TikTok users were female whose age bracket ranged mainly between 25 to 29 years old. These users mainly worked for private or company employees. Moreover, a large majority of TikTok adopters used it every day from 31 minutes to 60 minutes at night time; and most of them used TikTok in order to watch content video shared by others.

The outcomes of the hypothesis testing indicate the rejection of Hypothesis 1, which posits an assumed impact of subjective norm on user satisfaction with TikTok. Similarly, Hypothesis 5, examining the potential effect of content richness on user satisfaction with TikTok, is also rejected due to the p-value exceeding 0.05.

However, this study validates hypothesis 2, which is that perceived behavioral control influences user satisfaction with TikTok. Furthermore, the study validates hypotheses 3 and 4, which hypothesize the effect of perceived usefulness on user satisfaction with TikTok and perceived ease of use on user contentment with TikTok, respectively. Similarly, our study confirms hypotheses 6 and 7, which hypothesize the effect of flow state and personal innovativeness on TikTok user pleasure (see Table 4). Finally, the study supports hypothesis 8, which states that user happiness has a considerable effect on the intention to use TikTok.

In conclusion, this study enhances understanding of TikTok adoption by examining its impact on various stakeholders, including individual users, content creators, and businesses. Users benefit by leveraging TikTok for purposes beyond entertainment, using it to create enriched content that can attract followers, gain likes, and potentially establish themselves as influencers able to promote brands. Content creators, such as agencies and vloggers, can tailor TikTok content to align with clients' needs, broadening their audience and elevating their status as influencers. Businesses and organizations also gain valuable insights for incorporating TikTok into their advertising strategies to reach target audiences and expand potential customer bases. Additionally, as the researcher works directly with TikTok in Thailand, the study contributes new insights into user adoption behavior, offering practical value to the workplace and serving as a useful reference for future research in this field.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am deeply grateful to my family and the Panyapiwat Institute of Management. Their continuous support, encouragement, and belief in my capabilities have been indispensable throughout the journey of completing this research paper. Their unwavering commitment to my academic pursuits has been a source of inspiration, motivating me to persevere and achieve this significant accomplishment.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest found in this research

REFERENCES

Ajzen, I. (1985). From intentions to actions: A theory of planned behavior. In *Action control* (pp. 11–39). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-69746-3_2

Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *50*(2), 179–211. https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T

Alaniz, M. H. (2022). *Why businesses should use TikTok: a comprehensive guide.* legacymarketing. https://www.legacymarketing.com/blog/why-businesses-should-use-tiktok/

Al-Khasawneh, M., Sharabati, A., Al-Haddad, S., Tbakhi, R., & Abusaimeh, H. (2022). The adoption of TikTok application using TAM model. *International Journal of Data and Network Science*, *6*(4), 1389–1402. http://dx.doi.org/10.5267/j.ijdns.2022.5.012

Al-Maroof, R., Ayoubi, K., Alhumaid, K., Aburayya, A., Alshurideh, M., Alfaisal, R., & Salloum, S. (2021). The acceptance of social media video for knowledge acquisition, sharing and application: A comparative study among YouYube users and TikTok users' for medical purposes. *International Journal of Data and Network Science*, *5*(3), 197-214. http://dx.doi.org/10.5267/j.ijdns.2021.6.013

Alnaser, F. M. I., Ghani, M. A., Rahi, S., Mansour, M., & Abed, H. (2017). The influence of services marketing mix (7 ps.) and subjective norms on customer's satisfaction in islamic banks of palestine. *European Journal of Business and Management*, *9*(27), 20–25.

Appel, G., Grewal, L., Hadi, R., & Stephen, A. T. (2020). The future of social media in marketing. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *48*(1), 79–95. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-019-00695-1

Arslan, A. (2023). *10 Reasons Why TikTok Is Actually Good*. Makeuseof. https://www.makeuseof.com/reasons-why-tiktok-is-actually-good/

Cochran, W. G. (1977). *Sampling Techniques* (3rd Ed.). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Dani, N. J. (2017). A study on consumers' attitude towards online shopping. *International Journal of Research in Management & Business Studies*, *4*(3), 42–46. https://ijbmi.org /papers/Special%20Issue/NCETIDM-2017/H3439.pdf

Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. *MIS Quarterly: Management Information Systems*, *13*(3), 319–339. https://doi.org/10.2307/249008

Deborah, D. (2023). *TikTok: What it is, how it works, and why it's popular.* https://www.investopedia.com/what-is-tiktok-4588933

Elgarhy, S. D., & Abou-Shouk, M. (2022). The influence of co-creation and subjective norms on customer loyalty: customer satisfaction as a mediator. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/1528008X.2022.2152920

Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Belief, Attitude, Intention, and Behavior: An Introduction to Theory and Research*. Addison-Wesley. https://people.umass.edu/aizen/f&a1975.html

George, D., & Mallery, P. (2003). *SPSS for Windows Step-by-Step: A Simple Guide and Reference, 14.0 update* (7th Edition). Allyn & Bacon.

Gliem, J. A., & Gliem, R. R. (2003). Calculating, interpreting, and reporting cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for likert-type scales. *2003 Midwest Research to Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, and Community Education,* 82-88. https://scholarworks.indianapolis.iu.edu/items/63734e75-1604-45b6-aed8-40dddd7036ee

Gu, J.-C., Lee, S.-C., & Suh, Y.-H. (2009). Determinants of behavioral intention to mobile banking. *Expert Systems with Applications*, *36*(9), 11605–11616. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eswa.2009.03.024

Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., Anderson, R. E., & Tatham, R. L. (2006). *Multivariate data analysis* (6th ed.). Pearson University Press.

Ham, M., Jeger, M., & Frajman Ivković, A. (2015). The role of subjective norms in forming the intention to purchase green food. *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja*, *28*(1), 738–748. https://doi.org/10.1080/1331677X.2015.1083875

Hsu, C. L., & Lin, J. C.-C. (2021). The effects of gratifications, flow and satisfaction on the usage of livestreaming services. *Library Hi Tech*, *ahead-of-print*. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/LHT-02-2021-0069

Kemp, S. (2022, January 26). *Digital 2022: Global Overview Report — Data Reportal–Global Digital Insights*. https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-global-overview-report

Khan, A., Masrek, M. N., & Mahmood, K. (2019). The relationship of personal innovativeness, quality of digital resources and generic usability with users' satisfaction: a Pakistani perspective. *Digital Library Perspectives*, *35*(1), 15–30. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/DLP-12-2017-0046

Kim, J., & Park, J. (2005). A consumer shopping channel extension model: attitude shift toward the online store. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 9(1), 106-121. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/13612020510586433

Ko, Y. J., & Pastore, D. L. (2007). An instrument to assess customer perceptions of service quality and satisfaction in campus recreation programs. *Recreational Sports Journal*, *31*(1), 34–42. http://dx.doi.org/10.1123/rsj.31.1.34

Leesa-Nguansuk, S. (2022). *TikTok optimistic on prospects for growth.* BangkokPost. https://www.bangkokpost.com/business/2375495/tiktok-optimistic-on-prospects-for-growth

Liaw, S.-S. (2008). Investigating students' perceived satisfaction, behavioral intention, and effectiveness of e-learning: A case study of the Blackboard system. *Computers & Education*, *51*(2), 864–873. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2007.09.005

Ly, B., & Ly, R. (2022). Internet banking adoption under Technology Acceptance Model—Evidence from Cambodian users. *Computers in Human Behavior Reports*, *7*, 100224. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chbr.2022.100224

MacroTrends. (n.d.). *Phnom Penh, Cambodia Metro Area Population 1950-2023.* MacroTrends. https://www.macrotrends.net/cities/20357/phnom-penh/population

MarketingGuru. (2021). *TikTok's Marketing Plan for Year 2021 in Thailand.* MarketingGuru. https://www.marketingguru.io/blog/tiktoks-marketing-plan-for-year-2021-in-thailand

Norng, S. (2022). Factors Influencing Mobile Banking Adoption in Cambodia: The Structuring of TAM, DIT, and Trust with TPB. *Asian Journal of Business Research*, *12*(3), 21-42.

OOSGA. (2023). *Social Media in Cambodia - 2023 Stats & Platform Trends.* https://oosga.com/social-media/khm/

Pinheiro Cruz, P. P., & Muñoz Gallego, P. (2004). *Flow in eBank satisfaction measure* (Working Paper No. 2004-06) [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Universities of Valladolid, Burgos, Salamanca, and León.

Rachbini, W. (2018). The relationship of attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control on halal food purchasing behavior in Jakarta. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, *20*(1), 28–37. http://dx.doi.org/10.58968/eii.v5i1.258

Render, B., & Stair Jr, R. M., Hanna, M. E., & Hale, T. S. (2014). *Quantitative Analysis for Management* (12 edition). Pearson Education.

Rouibah, K., Ramayah, T., & May, O. S. (2011). Modeling user acceptance of internet banking in Malaysia: A partial least square (PLS) approach. In *E-adoption and socio-economic impacts: Emerging infrastructural effects* (pp. 1–23). IGI Global.

Saxena, K. (2020). *Coronavirus accelerates pace of digital education in India*. https://ediindia.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Coronovirus-Accelerates-Pace-of-Digital-Education-in-India.pdf

Shah, H. J., & Attiq, S. (2016). Impact of technology quality, perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness in the formation of consumer's satisfaction in the context of e-learning. *Abasyn University Journal of Social Sciences, 9*(1), 124–140.

Tandon, U., Kiran, R., & Sah, A. N. (2016). Customer satisfaction using website functionality, perceived usability and perceived usefulness towards online shopping in India. *Information Development*, *32*(5), 1657–1673. https://doi.org/10.1177/0266666915621106

Zhao, Y., Tong, T., Li, G., Ma, S., & Wang, L. (2017). The impact of brand awareness and customer experience on the brand loyalty of MI. *MATEC Web of Conferences*, *100*, 5025. https://doi.org/10.1051/matecconf/201710005025

Zyoud, S. H., Sweileh, W. M., Awang, R., & Al-Jabi, S. W. (2018). Global trends in research related to social media in psychology: mapping and bibliometric analysis. *International Journal of Mental Health Systems*, *12*(1), 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13033-018-0182-6

THE IMPACT OF CORPORATE BRAND COMPETITIVENESS AND SERVICE QUALITY ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN USING SMART CLASSROOM PRODUCTS: A CASE OF BEIJING ORIENTAL ZHONGYUAN DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY CO., LTD.

Libo Yan[a], Chitralada Trisakhon[b*]

[a b] Thongsook College, Bangkok, Thailand
* Corresponding author's e-mail: ap.chitralada@thongsook.ac.th

Received: 14 September 2024 / Revised: 12 November 2024 / Accepted: 17 December 2024

ABSTRACT
Purpose – This study examines the impact of corporate brand competitiveness and service quality on customer loyalty in the smart classroom products industry. The research aims to fill the gap in the literature by identifying specific factors influencing customer loyalty in this rapidly evolving technological sector.
Methodology – The research employed a descriptive design, gathering data with convenience random sampling technique from 400 participants, including teachers, students, and administrative staff. Data was collected via a structured questionnaire that measured corporate brand competitiveness, service quality, and customer loyalty, using a five-point Likert scale. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods, including regression analysis. Reliability and validity were ensured through rigorous testing of the research instruments.
Results – The findings indicate that demographic factors such as gender, age, and education do not significantly impact customer loyalty. However, corporate brand competitiveness, particularly in areas of competitive intelligence, pivotal merits, and communicative capacities, has a substantial influence on customer loyalty. Additionally, service quality, especially in terms of reliability, empathy, and assurance, was found to significantly drive customer loyalty in the smart classroom product market.
Implications – The study suggests that companies in the smart classroom sector should focus on enhancing brand competitiveness through market intelligence, strategic communication, and providing high-quality service. These factors are crucial for fostering customer loyalty in a technology-driven educational environment. The insights provided can guide companies in developing strategies that strengthen customer satisfaction and retention.
Originality/Value – This research provides new insights into the underexplored area of customer loyalty in the smart classroom products industry, offering valuable recommendations for both academic researchers and industry practitioners.

Keywords: Corporate brand competitiveness, Service quality, Customer loyalty, Smart classroom products

Paper Type: Research Article

INTRODUCTION
The use of smart classrooms has become increasingly widespread in educational institutions around the world due to rapid advances in technology. Smart classroom solutions provide sophisticated teaching tools and resources that enhance the learning experience for teachers and

Citation:
Yan, L, & Trisakhon, C. (2024). The impact of corporate brand competitiveness and service quality on customer loyalty in using smart classroom products: a case of Beijing oriental Zhongyuan digital technology co., ltd. RMUTT Global Business Accounting and Finance Review, 8(2), 32-45. https://doi.org/10.60101/gbafr.2024.276325

students (Al-Bataineh et al., 2008; Harrell, & Bynum, 2018). In China, smart classrooms are gaining prominence with initiatives particularly targeting the integration of multimedia, interactive whiteboards, and tablet computers to enhance the dynamism and interactivity of learning environments. From 2015 to 2020, the expenditure on smart education in China maintained a steady growth rate between 7% and 8% (China Association for Educational Instrument Industry, 2023). Research conducted by Dai et al. (2023) emphasizes the usage of smart classrooms to improve student happiness and learner engagement by using a multi-screen interactive learning system. Separate research highlights the significance of intelligent classrooms in fostering independent, contextual, and collaborative learning, in accordance with the recently implemented national curriculum standards (Huang, 2023). China's smart classroom programme is a component of a comprehensive national plan aimed at updating education, positioning it as a frontrunner in the development and use of smart classroom technology. The current trend is fundamentally transforming conventional education and establishing China as a prominent participant in the worldwide educational technology arena. With the increasing integration of smart classroom technologies, it is critical for organizations to differentiate themselves through the competitiveness of their corporate brand and service quality to drive customer loyalty. Examining the impact of corporate brand competitiveness and service quality on customer loyalty when using smart classroom goods is an important research topic that has not yet been thoroughly investigated. While there is research on customer loyalty in various industries such as retail and hospitality, there is a lack of information on the specific factors that influence customer loyalty in the smart classroom products industry (Li, 2013; Yeboah-Asiamah, et al., 2016 Ramanathan et al., 2017).

A significant research gap in this area is the inadequate investigation of the impact of brand competition on customer loyalty in the smart classroom products industry. Corporate brand competitiveness refers to a company's ability to differentiate itself from its competitors through the implementation of successful brand strategies, new product launches, and strategic positioning in the marketplace (Azizan & Yusr, 2019). In the dynamic field of smart classroom goods, it is critical for organizations to have a strong brand identity that not only appeals to their target audience of educators, students, and institutional decision makers, but also sets them apart from their competitors. This differentiation is critical to fostering brand preference and loyalty among consumers who are increasingly looking not only for practical utility, but also for brand compatibility with their educational goals and principles. Although the importance of brand competition in influencing consumer preferences and decisions is widely recognized, there is a lack of academic research on how corporate brand competitiveness directly impacts customer loyalty in this dynamic business and in global competition. This discrepancy underscores the urgent need for extensive research to investigate these interactions that could influence strategic decisions for companies engaged in the production and diffusion of smart classroom technology (Tunç, 2022; Mwazuna, & Museve, 2023).

Another major gap in the existing research is that not enough attention is paid to the importance of service quality for customer retention in the smart classroom industry. Service quality plays a crucial role in determining consumers' opinions and their overall satisfaction with a company and its offerings (Panda & Das, 2014; Obi et al., 2022). When it comes to smart classroom products, service quality includes various factors such as prompt and useful customer support assistance, ease and effectiveness of product installation and maintenance, reliability and accessibility of technical support, and proactive communication of updates and solutions. The aforementioned service components are crucial in educational institutions as they play an important role in ensuring the seamless integration and functioning of technology, which is necessary for the uninterrupted flow of learning activities (Lebedeva et al., 2021). In addition, educators and administrators often rely on excellent service quality to ensure that technology enhances, rather than hinders, the educational process. Although the influence of service quality on customer satisfaction and loyalty is widely recognized, there is a lack of empirical research that specifically examines how various aspects of service quality influence the loyalty of educational institutions and individuals towards smart classroom vendors. The lack of a focused study points to an important area that requires additional investigation. This research could provide important insights into how specific methods can be developed to improve customer service and support in the technology-driven industry (Prihanto, & Annas, 2023; Ramovš, & Milfelner, 2023).

Furthermore, previous research on customer loyalty in the smart classroom products industry primarily emphasizes general factors such as product quality and pricing, rather than thoroughly examining the intricate details and multi-layered elements of customer loyalty in this specific context (Nareswari et al., 2023; Mwazuna, & Museve, 2023). Due to the unique characteristics of the smart classroom industry, such as the rapid development of technology, the incorporation of modern teaching methods, and the increasing importance of digital learning solutions, it is imperative to conduct more detailed studies. These studies should consider the industry-specific aspects that impact customer loyalty, such as the impact of technical innovations, user interface design, software and hardware reliability, and how well these products align with educational standards and outcomes. In addition, the sector's unique environment of many end-user groups, including students, faculty and institutional administrators, requires a specialized approach to understanding how each group views value and cultivates loyalty. In education, the factors that typically drive loyalty in consumer electronics or enterprise software may not be fully applicable. This is because in an educational context, desired outcomes include not only usefulness and reliability, but also effectiveness in promoting education and consistency with educational goals (Rahayu et al., 2023; Wong et al., 2023). A more thorough investigation of the influence of these specific characteristics, such as the flexibility of smart goods in meeting changing educational needs, the level of support offered during the transition, and the actual educational benefits derived from the use of these products, could therefore provide valuable insights into their impact on loyalty. These insights would not only address a serious lack of information in the current body of knowledge, but also provide guidance to product manufacturers and educational institutions to make well-informed decisions that improve customer enjoyment quality and loyalty over a long period of time.

Thus, there is a clear need for further research on the influence of corporate brand competitiveness and service quality on customer loyalty when using smart educational items. Researchers can offer valuable insights to companies in the smart classroom products sector by examining the specific drivers of customer loyalty and filling the gaps in the existing literature. This research can help these companies improve their competitive advantage and build strong customer relationships. Accordingly, the research objectives include: 1) to study customer loyalty in the use of smart products in the classroom, categorized by personal information; 2) to investigate the influence of corporate brand competitiveness on customer loyalty when using smart classroom products; and 3) to investigate the influence of service quality on customer loyalty when using smart classroom products. The study helps global businesses in accounting and finance understand the importance of investing in brand and service quality to enhance customer loyalty, which results in stable revenue, increased business value and reduced risk of losing customers to competitors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Corporate Brand Competitiveness

Corporate brand competitiveness is widely recognized as a critical determinant of a company's success, yet scholars debate its dimensions and the mechanisms through which it drives competitiveness. On one hand, Veselinova et al. (2016) argue that corporate brand competitiveness hinges on a company's ability to leverage its brand as an intangible asset, capable of delivering a sustained competitive advantage. This aligns with Lučić and Radnović's (2015) assertion that a strong corporate brand fosters distinctiveness in a saturated market, enabling firms to influence consumer choices and enhance market success. However, this perspective is challenged by Biaowen (2014), who emphasizes the evolving role of corporate branding in the Web 2.0 era, arguing that digital platforms now play a pivotal role in brand competitiveness, pushing organizations to innovate continually in online spaces. While competitive intelligence is crucial for understanding market trends and gaining a strategic edge (Jasima et al., 2020), some scholars contend that communicative capacities are equally vital. Khanlarov et al. (2020) suggest that effective communication—particularly through digital mediums—boosts brand loyalty and satisfaction, which are essential for sustaining competitiveness. Meanwhile, pivotal merits such as resource allocation and differentiation strategies (Hosseini et al., 2014) are viewed as foundational by some researchers, yet others like Lopes and Duguid (2010) argue that intangible assets, such as corporate branding, have become the primary drivers of competitiveness in an increasingly digital and globalized marketplace. Organizational capacities further complicate the debate, with scholars like Baruel Bencherqui and Kefi (2014) highlighting the importance of aligning corporate branding with organizational learning to enhance competitiveness. However, as companies grapple with fluctuating market conditions and consumer preferences, the role of corporate brand competitiveness remains contentious. Although there is consensus on its importance, scholars differ on which sub-dimensions—competitive intelligence, pivotal merits, communicative capacities, or organizational capacities—are most decisive in sustaining competitive advantage (Lučić & Radnović, 2015; Hosseini et al., 2014).

Service Quality

Service quality, a critical factor in organizational success, has been extensively studied with varying definitions and models emphasizing its importance across industries. Some scholars, such as Udayalakshmi and Sridevi (2023), argue that service quality is primarily determined by how well a business meets consumer expectations, while Jashireh et al. (2016) and Tănască et al. (2014) emphasize the role of service performance in relation to those expectations. Central to the discussion of service quality are five sub-dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility. The debate on the significance of these dimensions suggests that reliability, the consistency and dependability of a service, is often seen as foundational, with scholars like Alizadeh et al. (2022) highlighting its financial and operational benefits in sectors such as distribution and telecommunications. On the other hand, responsiveness, the promptness in addressing customer needs, is equally critical, especially in industries where timely intervention directly impacts customer satisfaction, as demonstrated by Yusefi et al. (2022) in retail and healthcare settings. However, while responsiveness may foster immediate customer gratification, assurance, which pertains to trust and confidence in the service, is pivotal for long-term client relationships, particularly in sensitive fields like banking and pharmaceuticals (Patil et al., 2023; Schönberger et al., 2022). Empathy, the ability to understand and care for customer needs, also plays a vital role, with Cadet and Sainfort (2023) arguing that it not only enhances customer satisfaction but also mitigates employee burnout, especially in healthcare. Yet, some debate that the impact of empathy might vary depending on customer expectations and the context of service interactions, as suggested by Tashtoush (2022). Tangibility, the physical elements of service, while often undervalued, is crucial in industries like hospitality and healthcare, where the physical environment directly influences customer perceptions (Hasan et al., 2008; Panda & Das, 2014).

Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty is a critical determinant of business success, comprising two key dimensions: behavioral loyalty and attitudinal loyalty. Behavioral loyalty refers to repeat purchases and the continuous use of a company's services, and it is often cited as a direct reflection of customer satisfaction with factors like service quality, security, and privacy (Ikhsan et al., 2022). Some researchers argue that behavioral loyalty is the most tangible measure of a customer's commitment to a brand, as it involves concrete actions like repurchases or service usage (Imtiaz et al., 2022). However, others contend that attitudinal loyalty—defined as the emotional attachment and positive perception a consumer holds towards a brand—is equally, if not more, important, as it is an essential precursor to behavioral loyalty (Suresh & Bhavadharani, 2021). Attitudinal loyalty fosters a deeper connection between customers and brands, which in turn influences their future behaviors, such as continued patronage and brand advocacy (Keeling et al., 2022). Critics of a sole focus on attitudinal loyalty point out that positive attitudes do not always translate into repeat purchases, particularly in sectors where switching costs are low or competition is high (Agha et al., 2021). On the other hand, behavioral loyalty without attitudinal loyalty may result in customers leaving the brand as soon as a competitor offers better incentives or lower prices (Carmen & Marius, 2016). Therefore, scholars like Zhou (2021) emphasize the need for a dual focus that integrates both dimensions, as strong attitudinal loyalty can enhance behavioral loyalty, leading to sustained engagement and long-term brand success. Measuring both dimensions is crucial, as relying solely on one could provide a misleading view of customer loyalty. Moreover, the role of customer satisfaction, trust, technology adoption, and service quality is pivotal in shaping both behavioral and attitudinal loyalty, as satisfied and committed customers are more likely to make repeat purchases and recommend the brand to others (Salleh et al., 2018; Khairawati, 2020; Gautam, & Sah, 2023; Shariffuddin et al., 2023). Additionally, customer loyalty in ed-tech may be influenced by national education policies that determine technology adoption and implementation effectiveness. Policies that promote digital transformation in education, such as government programs supporting smart classrooms, may help foster both behavioral and attitudinal loyalty by ensuring quality and continuity of technology use, which in turn helps build trust and long-term user engagement.

Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

There is evidence suggesting that individual factors such as age, education, and occupation can affect loyalty to technological products like smart classrooms (Alfoudari et al., 2023). However, some argue that these variations in personal data may not have a significant impact, as loyalty could be more influenced by overall satisfaction with the product itself rather than demographic differences (Li, 2024). Thus, while personal information might offer some explanatory power in understanding loyalty, it could be secondary to other factors such as product quality and user experience. In addition, some studies suggest that companies with strong brands can differentiate themselves in the marketplace, which leads to increased customer trust and loyalty (Jacksen et al., 2021; Pham et al., 2019). Critics might argue that corporate brand competitiveness alone cannot guarantee loyalty, as other elements like pricing and technological capabilities may have a greater influence. Nonetheless, the importance of a competitive brand is well-established in fostering an emotional connection with consumers, making this hypothesis compelling. Finally, superior service quality—manifested in elements such as reliability, responsiveness, and assurance—has been shown to significantly affect customer loyalty in various sectors (Esmaeilpour et al., 2016; Nobar & Rostamzadeh, 2018). Critics may argue that while service quality is important, it may not be the sole driver of loyalty, especially in technology-driven environments where product features and innovation are crucial. Accordingly, the hypothesis as well as the conceptual framework can be developed as follows.

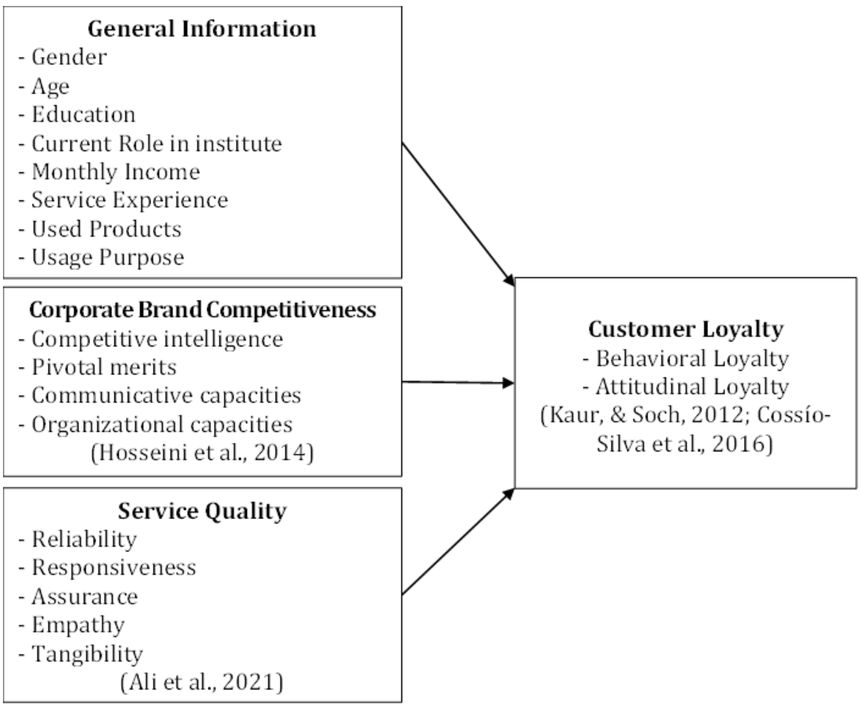


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Hypothesis Development

Hypothesis 1: Customers with different personal information have a different customer loyalty when using smart classroom products.

Hypothesis 2: Corporate brand competitiveness has an influence on customer loyalty when using smart classroom products.

Hypothesis 3: Service quality has an influence on customer loyalty when using smart classroom products.

METHODOLOGY

The research adopts a descriptive design, focusing on evaluating smart classroom products by gathering data from three key stakeholder groups: teachers and educators, students, and administrative staff. These groups are selected to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these technologies are utilized and perceived in educational settings. A sample size of 400 participants was determined using Cochran's formula, ensuring a statistically significant representation of the population. The convenience sampling method is employed due to its practicality, allowing for easy access to participants, although it introduces potential biases as it may not represent the entire population. This method is chosen due to resource limitations, acknowledging the possibility that participants might share characteristics that could skew the results.

Data is collected through a structured questionnaire, designed systematically to capture detailed insights on corporate brand competitiveness, service quality, and customer loyalty in the context of smart classroom technologies. The questionnaire includes multiple-choice questions for general demographic data and employs a five-point Likert scale to measure variables related to corporate brand competitiveness, service quality, and customer loyalty, allowing for nuanced responses across a range of attitudes. The instruments undergo a rigorous validation process using the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC), as suggested by Jusoh (2018), with a panel of three experts reviewing the relevance of the items. Reliability is further tested through Cronbach's alpha, with values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency across variables (Amirrudin, Nasution, & Supahar, 2021). Data collection involves distributing questionnaires to teachers, students, and administrative staff to gather diverse perspectives on the usage, effectiveness, and challenges of smart classroom products. Before the full deployment, a pilot test with 30 participants ensures clarity and reliability of the instrument.

Once data is collected, it is subjected to a cleaning process to eliminate any incomplete or inaccurate responses. The cleaned data is then coded for analysis using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, such as mean and standard deviation, provide a summary of respondent characteristics and average perceptions. Inferential statistics, including independent sample t-tests, One-way ANOVA, and regression analysis, are used to explore relationships between variables, such as the impact of service quality on customer loyalty. The regression analysis also includes diagnostic tests like Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) to check for multicollinearity, ensuring the reliability of the model. The study thus employs a robust methodological framework, combining rigorous instrument validation, reliable sampling techniques, and comprehensive data analysis to draw meaningful conclusions about the effectiveness of smart classroom technologies in educational environments.

RESULTS

Profile of Respondents

Summary of the analysis of respondents' general data revealed that the majority of respondents were male, accounting for 205 individuals (51.25 %). The predominant age group was between 31 and 40 years, comprising 132 respondents (33.00 %). A significant portion of the respondents held a bachelor's degree, totaling 195 individuals (48.75 %). The majority were employed as teachers or educators, with 199 respondents (49.75 %). Regarding income, 195 respondents (48.75 %) reported an average monthly income exceeding 5,000 CNY. In terms of service experience, 161 respondents (40.25 %) had 3-4 years of experience. The most frequently used product was the Interactive Whiteboard (Smart Board), utilized by 89 respondents (22.25 %). The primary purpose for using the service was to enhance efficiency and productivity in both studying and working, as indicated by 102 respondents (25.50 %).

Service Quality, Corporate Brand Competitiveness, and Customer Loyalty

Table 1. Mean, Standard Deviation and Interpretation of Service Quality, Corporate Brand Competitiveness, and Customer Loyalty

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Corporate Brand Competitiveness	3.71	0.73	High
- Competitive intelligence	3.72	1.01	High
- Pivotal merits	3.73	1.01	High
- Communicative capacities	3.62	1.05	High
- Organizational capacities	3.78	0.98	High
Service Quality	3.65	0.75	High
- Reliability	3.65	1.08	High
- Responsiveness	3.53	1.12	High
- Assurance	3.65	1.10	High
- Empathy	3.72	1.05	High
- Tangibility	3.69	1.02	High
Customer Loyalty	3.70	0.85	High
- Behavioral Loyalty	3.65	1.12	High
- Attitudinal Loyalty	3.75	0.99	High

Table 1 shows that all variables across these three categories are rated as "high." For corporate brand competitiveness, the mean scores range from 3.62 to 3.78, with "organizational capacities" receiving the highest score. The overall mean for corporate brand competitiveness is 3.71. Service quality also shows consistently high ratings, with individual dimensions like "empathy" and "tangibility" receiving the highest scores, and a total mean of 3.65. Customer loyalty is similarly high, with "attitudinal loyalty" scoring 3.75 and "behavioral loyalty" scoring 3.65, leading to an overall mean of 3.70. All variables indicate strong performance in their respective areas.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1: Customers with different personal information have a different customer loyalty when using smart classroom products.

Table 2. Hypothesis testing results of different personal information on customer loyalty

Personal Information	Customer Loyalty	
	t-value / F value	**Sig.**
Gender	t = 1.598	Sig. = .111
Age	F = 0.348	Sig. = .845
Education	F = 0.450	Sig. = .638
Current Role in Institute	F = 0.156	Sig. = .856
Average Monthly Income	F = 1.345	Sig. = .259
Service Experience	F = 0.478	Sig. = .698
Used Products	F = 0.832	Sig. = .545
Usage Purpose	F = 0.816	Sig. = .539

Table 2 indicates hypothesis testing results which show that none of the personal information factors, such as gender, age, education, current role, income, service experience, used products, or usage purpose, significantly affect customer loyalty. All the significant values are above the .05 threshold, indicating no meaningful relationship between these variables and customer loyalty in this study.

Hypothesis 2: Corporate brand competitiveness has an influence on customer loyalty when using smart classroom products.

Table 3. Hypothesis testing results of corporate brand competitiveness on customer loyalty

Corporate Brand Competitiveness	**b**	**Std. Error**	**β**	**t**	**Sig.**	**Tolerance**	**VIF**
Constant	.821	.148		5.545	.000		
- Competitive intelligence	.456	.035	.543	13.030	.000	.635	1.574
- Pivotal merits	.158	.036	.188	4.403	.000	.604	1.655
- Communicative capacities	.085	.029	.106	2.942	.003	.859	1.165
- Organizational capacities	.076	.031	.088	2.430	.016	.845	1.183
$R = .751$, $R^2 = .564$, Adjusted $R^2 = .559$, $SE_{EST} = .562$, $F = 127.570$, Sig. = .000							

Table 3 indicates that corporate brand competitiveness, specifically competitive intelligence, pivotal merits, communicative capacities, and organizational capacities, has a statistically significant influence on customer loyalty in using smart classroom products of Beijing Oriental Zhongruan Digital Technology Co., Ltd. at the .05 level, with a predictive power of 55.9% (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.559$) and a standard error of 0.562 ($SE_{EST} = 0.562$). Furthermore, the results of the multicollinearity test revealed that the Tolerance values ranged from 0.604 to 0.859, which is above the 0.100 threshold, and the VIF values ranged from 1.165 to 1.655, which is well below the 10.000 threshold, indicating that the independent variables did not exhibit multicollinearity issues. Among the dimensions of corporate brand competitiveness, competitive intelligence ($\beta = .543$) was found to have the most substantial influence on customer loyalty in using smart classroom products of Beijing Oriental Zhongruan Digital Technology Co., Ltd. This was followed by pivotal merits ($\beta = .188$), communicative capacities ($\beta = .106$), and organizational capacities ($\beta = .088$), in descending order of their impact.

Hypothesis 3: Service quality has an influence on customer loyalty when using smart classroom products.

Table 4. Hypothesis testing results of service quality on overall customer loyalty

Service Quality	**b**	**Std. Error**	**β**	**t**	**Sig.**	**Tolerance**	**VIF**
Constant	1.256	.170		7.375	.000		
- Reliability	.211	.038	.268	5.575	.000	.690	1.450
- Responsiveness	.066	.035	.087	1.857	.064	.731	1.368
- Assurance	.096	.036	.125	2.699	.007	.747	1.339
- Empathy	.197	.038	.244	5.194	.000	.722	1.384
- Tangibility	.097	.037	.117	2.636	.009	.815	1.227
$R = .608$, $R^2 = .370$, Adjusted $R^2 = .362$, $SE_{EST} = .676$, $F = 46.214$, Sig. = .000							

From Table 4 indicates that service quality, specifically reliability, assurance, empathy, and tangibility, has a statistically significant influence on customer loyalty in using smart classroom products of Beijing Oriental Zhongruan Digital Technology Co., Ltd. at the .05 level, with a predictive power of 36.2% (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.362$) and a standard error of 0.676 ($SE_{EST} = 0.676$). Furthermore, the results of the multicollinearity test revealed that the Tolerance values ranged from 0.690 to 0.815, which is above the 0.100 threshold, and the VIF values ranged from 1.165 to 1.655, which is well below the 10.000 threshold, indicating that the independent variables did not exhibit multicollinearity issues. Among the dimensions of service quality, reliability (β = .268) was found to have the most substantial influence on customer loyalty in using smart classroom products of Beijing Oriental Zhongruan Digital Technology Co., Ltd. This is followed by empathy (β = .244), assurance (β = .125), and tangibility (β = .117) in descending order of their impact.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

From the study, the result indicated that customers with different personal information, including gender, age, education, current role in institute, average monthly income, service experience, used products, and usage purpose, do not have a different loyalty when using smart classroom products. This is because customer loyalty is driven more by service quality and satisfaction rather than personal demographic factors. Also, loyalty can be influenced by the emotional connection customers develop with the product or service rather than demographic variables (Kaligis et al., 2023). However, some scholars argued that personal information such as gender, age, and income may have minimal impact on loyalty due to the overarching influence of factors like competitive intelligence, pivotal merits, communication skills, and organizational capabilities, as previously highlighted. For instance, research by Veselinova et al. (2016) and Lučić and Radnović (2015) emphasizes that loyalty is more directly influenced by a company's ability to differentiate itself and offer strong customer service, independent of customers' demographic differences. In line with this, Esmaeilpour et al. (2016) argue that customer satisfaction—driven by competitive intelligence and key merits—is a universal factor in building loyalty, unaffected by the individual's specific background. However, opposing viewpoints suggest that demographic factors can indeed influence customer loyalty. For example, Hosseini et al. (2014) noted that customers with different roles or experiences might respond differently to a brand's strategic initiatives, especially regarding innovation and market adaptability. Nobar and Rostamzadeh (2018) found that customers from higher-income brackets or those with extensive service experience might expect more from product quality and customer service, influencing their loyalty. Furthermore, Pham et al. (2019) highlighted that users' specific roles or purposes of product usage could impact their level of satisfaction, subsequently affecting their loyalty to the brand.

In addition, the study indicated that corporate brand competitiveness, including competitive intelligence, pivotal merits, communicative capacities, and organizational capabilities, highly influences customer loyalty in using smart classroom products is well-supported but warrants a nuanced debate. Competitive intelligence, as found by Hosseini et al. (2014), has the greatest influence on customer loyalty, as it enables a company to innovate and meet market demands. This aligns with findings from Veselinova et al. (2016) that brands utilizing competitive intelligence build customer trust and loyalty by staying ahead of market trends. Esmaeilpour et al. (2016) further support this by noting that competitive intelligence enhances brand equity, which in turn influences loyalty. However, some argue that while competitive intelligence is crucial, it is not always the most dominant factor. For example, Lučić and Radnović (2015) claim that pivotal merits, like excellent customer service, also play a vital role in fostering loyalty. In highly competitive markets, brands that differentiate through exceptional service gain a competitive edge and boost customer satisfaction, as Nobar and Rostamzadeh (2018) observed in the hotel industry. Furthermore, communication capacities significantly influence loyalty by promoting trust and satisfaction. Khanlarov et al. (2020) found that consistent and effective communication builds emotional connections with customers, thus fostering behavioral loyalty. However, critics may argue that communication is only effective when accompanied by strong product quality or innovative services. Lastly, organizational capacities, though often perceived as less impactful by customers, can indirectly influence loyalty through efficient management and resource allocation (Veselinova et al., 2016). This operational efficiency, while not as visible to consumers, instills confidence in the brand's ability to adapt to market changes, thereby promoting long-term loyalty (Esmaeilpour et al., 2016). While organizational capacity may not be as immediately influential as competitive intelligence or customer service, it remains a vital element in sustaining brand trust and fostering loyalty. Ultimately, the combined effects of these factors highlight the multifaceted nature of brand competitiveness, with each element playing a significant yet varying role in influencing customer loyalty.

Lastly, the study revealed that service quality, including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility, has a high influence on customer loyalty when using smart classroom products. This is because good service quality can ensure that the service consistently meets expectations, building trust and encouraging continued use. Indeed, the study result can is well-supported by several grounds. For example, reliability, often considered the cornerstone of service quality, is widely mentioned to have the greatest impact on customer loyalty, particularly in industries that depend on continuous and reliable service. Parasuraman et al.'s (1991) SERVQUAL model emphasizes reliability as critical for building customer trust, as brands that consistently meet service promises are more likely to retain customers through repeated purchases and recommendations (Tănască et al., 2014). Moreover, reliability's direct link to loyalty is evident in many sectors, including fast food (Esmaeilpour et al., 2016). Yet, empathy is equally significant, as it fosters long-term attitudinal loyalty by ensuring customers feel understood and valued, which is vital in the educational technology industry (Tashtoush, 2022). While reliability emphasizes consistent performance, empathy emphasizes personal connection, a critical factor in industries requiring trust and tailored support, such as smart classroom products (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). However, assurance, which relates to customer confidence in employees' expertise and courtesy, has also been proven to enhance trust and loyalty, especially when customers rely on professionals for solutions (Zeithaml, 2000). Studies from various industries, including hospitality and education, affirm that assurance strengthens long-term customer trust and satisfaction (Jacksen et al., 2021). Nonetheless, tangibility or the physical aspects of service are often viewed as secondary in impact. Although customers appreciate modern facilities and accessible platforms, they tend to consider these as baseline expectations, limiting their long-term influence on loyalty (Pham et al., 2019). While tangibility may be fundamental, it does not inspire the same emotional attachment or trust as reliability or empathy. Thus, while all five service quality dimensions influence loyalty, reliability and empathy emerge as the most critical for ensuring both behavioral and attitudinal loyalty, with assurance reinforcing trust through employee competence.

In alignment with result discussion, the study can provide policy and practical recommendations. To enhance corporate brand competitiveness, companies should improve competitive intelligence by forming dedicated teams to collect and analyze market data, enabling quicker innovation and product development. Emphasizing the key benefits of the brand, such as exceptional customer service and strong market positioning, is essential for building customer loyalty. Companies should also focus on improving brand communication through faster, customized interactions using modern tools, while ensuring employees are well-trained in communication skills. Additionally, organizations should continuously invest in developing human resources and processes, fostering innovation, adaptability, and long-term customer trust and loyalty. Meanwhile, to ensure high service quality, companies should focus on reliability by developing consistent standards and quickly addressing customer issues to build trust and loyalty. Empathy is crucial, requiring employees to listen carefully and respond to individual customer needs, fostering strong relationships. Assurance involves training employees to be professional and knowledgeable, ensuring they can resolve queries efficiently, which enhances trust in their capabilities. Lastly, tangibility emphasizes maintaining up-to-date, user-friendly facilities and platforms, particularly online, to improve customer experience and encourage repeat business. These strategies collectively promote customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES

The limitations in the existing research on brand competitiveness and customer loyalty include a lack of focus on the impact of emerging digital technologies such as AI and Big Data analytics, as well as insufficient comparative studies across different industries. Additionally, there is a gap in understanding how proactive customer service, particularly in technology-driven sectors, influences customer loyalty. Similarly, the relationship between corporate sustainability and customer loyalty remains underexplored, particularly in terms of how sustainable business practices influence consumer behavior. These gaps highlight several future research possibilities. For example, future studies could explore how AI and Big Data analytics impact brand competitiveness and customer loyalty by examining the role of personalized digital interactions. Comparative studies across industries could offer insights into sector-specific loyalty drivers, while research into proactive customer service could reveal its influence on customer retention in complex technological products. Furthermore, future research should focus on the relationship between corporate sustainability and customer loyalty, exploring how eco-friendly and socially responsible practices align with customer values and affect repurchase behavior. These areas of exploration would provide a deeper understanding of brand loyalty in an evolving market landscape.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that both corporate brand competitiveness and service quality significantly influence customer loyalty in the smart classroom products industry. Key findings reveal that factors such as competitive intelligence, pivotal merits, communicative capacities, and organizational capacities are pivotal drivers of loyalty, with competitive intelligence having the most substantial impact. Additionally, service quality dimensions such as reliability, empathy, assurance, and tangibility were found to play crucial roles in fostering both behavioral and attitudinal loyalty, with reliability and empathy emerging as the most influential. Contrary to expectations, demographic factors such as gender, age, and occupation did not significantly affect customer loyalty, emphasizing the overarching importance of product satisfaction and service quality. The research highlights the growing significance of brand differentiation and excellent customer service in the rapidly evolving smart classroom industry. These findings contribute to the broader understanding of how brand strategies and service quality shape customer loyalty, particularly in technology-driven educational environments, offering valuable insights for organizations aiming to enhance their competitive advantage and customer retention.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest found in this research.

REFERENCES

Agha, A. A., Rashid, A., Rasheed, R., Khan, S., & Khan, U. (2021). Antecedents of customer loyalty at telecomm sector. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry, 12*(9), 1352-1374.

Al-Bataineh, A., Anderson, S., Toledo, C., & Wellinski, S. (2008). A study of technology integration in the classroom. *International Journal of Instructional Media, 35*(4), 381-388.

Alfoudari, A. M., Durugbo, C. M., & Aldhmour, F. M. (2023). Exploring quality attributes of smart classrooms from the perspectives of academics. *Education and Information Technologies, 28*(10), 13109-13151. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-022-11452-3

Ali, B., Gardi, B., Othman, B. J., & Ahmed, S. A. (2021). Hotel Service Quality: The Impact of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction in Hospitality. *International Journal of Engineering Business and Management, 5*(3), 14-28. http://dx.doi.org/10.22161/ijebm.5.3.2

Alizadeh, A., Fereidunian, A., Kamwa, I., Mohseni-Bonab, S. M., & Lesani, H. (2022). A multi-period regulation methodology for reliability as service quality considering reward-penalty scheme. *IEEE Transactions on Power Delivery, 38*(2), 1440-1451. http://dx.doi.org/10.1109/TPWRD.2022.3215964

Amirrudin, M., Nasution, K., & Supahar, S. (2021). Effect of Variability on Cronbach Alpha Reliability in Research Practice. Jurnal Matematika Statistika dan Komputasi, 17(2), 223-230. http://dx.doi.org/10.20956/jmsk.v17i2.11655

Azizan, N. S., & Yusr, M. M. (2019). The influence of customer satisfaction, brand trust, and brand image towards customer loyalty. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices, 2*(7), 93-108. http://dx.doi.org/10.35631/ijemp.270010

Baruel Bencherqui, D., & Kefi, M. K. (2014). Corporate Competitive Advantage: from organizational Learning (absorptive capacity) to Innovation. *Revue de gestion des ressources humaines*, (4), 56-70.

Biaowen, L. (2014). The evaluation research of corporate brand competitiveness in Web2. 0 environment. *The Open Cybernetics & Systemics Journal, 8*(1), 1047-1051. http://dx.doi.org/10.2174/1874110X014080101047

Cadet, F., & Sainfort, F. (2023). Service quality in health care: empathy as a double-edged sword in the physician–patient relationship. *International Journal of Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Marketing, 17*(1), 115-131. https://doi.org/10.1108/ijphm-09-2021-0092

Carmen, R., & Marius, S. (2016). Customer loyalty using customer relationship management. *Management Strategies Journal, 31*(1), 285-288. http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3472492

China Association for Educational Instrument Industry. (2023). *China's smart classroom development trends and its integration in education*. https://www.chinaaiei.com/en/News/info/225.html

Cossío-Silva, F., Revilla-Camacho, M., Vega-Vázquez, M., & Palacios-Florencio, B. (2016). Value co-creation and customer loyalty. *Journal of Business Research, 69*(5), 1621-1625. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.10.028

Dai, Z., Zhu, F., Zhao, L., Xiong, J., & Zhu, X. (2023). Designing a smart classroom based on a multi-screen interactive learning system for improving student satisfaction. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning, 18*(22), 38-58. https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v18i22.39959

Esmaeilpour, M., Mohamadi, Z., & Rajabi, A. (2016). Effect of dimensions of service quality on the brand equity in the fast food industry. *Studies in Business and Economics, 11*(3), 30-46. http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/sbe-2016-0033

Gautam, D. K., & Sah, G. K. (2023). Online banking service practices and its impact on e-customer satisfaction and e-customer loyalty in developing country of South Asia-Nepal. *SAGE Open*, *13*(3), 21582440231185580. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231185580

Harrell, S., & Bynum, Y. (2018). Factors affecting technology integration in the classroom. *Alabama Journal of Educational Leadership, 5*, 12-18.

Hasan, H. F. A., Ilias, A., Rahman, R. A., & Razak, M. Z. A. (2008). Service quality and student satisfaction: A case study at private higher education institutions. *International business research, 1*(3), 163-175. https://doi.org/10.5539/ibr.v1n3p163

Hosseini, S. M., Hamidizadeh, M. R., & Taheri, M. (2014). Corporate competitiveness: a systematic review. *Arth Prabandh J Econ Manag, 3*(2), 119-140.

Huang, C. (2023). Smart classroom empowering students' growth and development: A case study of Zhongliang Xiangyun Branch of Chengdu Longjiang Road *Primary School. Science Insights Education Frontiers, 23*(S1). https://doi.org/10.15354/sief.23.s1.ab014

Ikhsan, R. B., Mohammed, G., Putriana, I., Sriwidadi, T., & Wahono, J. W. (2022, September). Customer Loyalty Based On Internet Service Providers-Service Quality. In *2022 6th International Conference on Informatics and Computational Sciences* (pp. 18-23). IEEE.

Imtiaz, R., Nadeem, S., Mallick, F. A., Ghouri, Z., & Aziz, A. (2022). How Attitudes Translate to Brand Loyalty: Examining the Antecedents and Consequences of Attitudinal and Behavioral Brand Loyalty. *Propel Journal of Academic Research, 2*(2), 189-216. https://doi.org/10.55464/pjar.v2i2.43

Jacksen, Chandra, T., & Putra, R. (2021). Service Quality and Brand Image on Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty at Pesonna Hotel Pekanbaru. *Journal of Applied Business and Technology, 2*(2), 142-153. http://dx.doi.org/10.35145/jabt.v2i2.70

Jashireh, A., Slambolchi, A., & Mobarakabadi, H. (2016). A literature review of service quality and customer satisfaction. *Advanced Social Humanities and Mangement, 3*(2), 1-12.

Jasima, H., Sulaimanb, Z., & Zakuanc, N. (2020). Influence of competitive intelligence success on business competitive advantage: A conceptual framework. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change, 11*(12), 795-807.

Jusoh, Z. (2018). A Rasch Analysis Of Reading Skill Across Text Type And Item Format [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. International Islamic University Malaysia.

Kaligis, J. N., Muhari, M. D. A., Sopiana, Y., Agustina, W., & Sabtohadi, J. (2023). Effect Of Gender On Customer Loyalty. *Journal of Law And Sustainable Development*, *11*(3), e610-e610. ttps://doi.org/10.55908/sdgs.v11i3.610

Kaur, J., & Soch, P. (2012) Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty: A Study of Indian Consumers. *Journal of Business Ethics, 105*, 567-579.

Keeling, D. I., de Ruyter, K., & Cox, D. (2022). Introduction to the Handbook of Research on Customer Loyalty. In *Handbook of Research on Customer Loyalty* (pp. 1-3). Edward Elgar Publishing.

Khairawati, S. (2020). Effect of customer loyalty program on customer satisfaction and its impact on customer loyalty. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science, 9*(1), 15-23. https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v9i1.603

Khanlarov, E., Chygryn, O. Y., Chyhryn, O. Y., & Liulov, O. V. (2020). *Marketing and management strategies for enhancing green competitiveness* [Doctoral dissertation]. SumDU Repository. https://essuir.sumdu.edu.ua/handle/123456789/83877

Lebedeva, T. E., Prokhorova, M. P., Krylova, T. V., Vinogradova, S. A., & Lebedeva, M. V. (2021). Electronic Services as Components of the Future Education. *In Economic Issues of Social Entrepreneurship* (pp. 405-414). Springer International Publishing.

Li, S. C. (2013). Exploring the Relationships among Service Quality, Customer Loyalty and Word-Of-Mouth for Private Higher Education in Taiwan. *Asia Pacific Management Review, 18*(4). http://dx.doi.org/10.6126/APMR.2013.18.4.02

Lopes, T. D. S., & Duguid, P. (2010). Introduction: Brands and Competitiveness. In *Trademarks, Brands, and Competitiveness* (pp. 17-24). Routledge.

Lučić, J. M., & Radnović, B. (2015). Corporate brand with respect to market competitiveness of goods and services. *Poslovna ekonomija, 9*(2), 385-410.

Mwazuna, A. N., & Museve, E. (2023). Sustainable Firm Performance through Product Differentiation Strategies; the Hidden Treasure of Customer Loyalty. *European Journal of Management and Marketing Studies, 8*(2), 104-127. https://doi.org/10.46827/ejmms.v8i2.1499

Nareswari, A., Nawangsih, N., & Wirawan, R. (2023). Creating Customer Loyalty Based on Brand Image, Service Quality, Learning Quality, by Mediation of Customer Trust in Purwacaraka Music Studio. *Innovation Business Management and Accounting Journal, 2*(2), 71-77. https://doi.org/10.56070/ibmaj.v2i2.44

Nobar, H. B. K., & Rostamzadeh, R. (2018). The impact of customer satisfaction, customer experience and customer loyalty on brand power: empirical evidence from hotel industry. *Journal of Business Economics and Management, 19*(2), 417-430. http://dx.doi.org/10.3846/jbem.2018.5678

Obi, E., Ewona, I., Oduobuk, E. J., Ekah, U. J., & Iloke, J. (2022). Quality of service reliability: A study of received signal quality in GSM networks. *Asian Journal of Physical and Chemical Sciences, 10*(3), 25-34. http://dx.doi.org/10.9734/AJOPACS/2022/v10i3183

Panda, T. K., & Das, S. (2014). The role of tangibility in service quality and its impact on external customer satisfaction: A comparative study of hospital and hospitality sectors. *IUP Journal of Marketing Management, 13*(4), 53-69.

Parasuraman, A., Berry, L. L., & Zeithaml, V. A. (1991). Refinement and reassessment of the SERVQUAL scale. *Journal of retailing, 67*(4), 420-450.

Patil, D. K., Patil, D. R., & Patil, S. A. (2023). A review on introduction to quality assurance. *Research journal of Pharmacology and Pharmacodynamics, 15*(2), 73-76. https://doi.org/10.52711/2321-5836.2023.00015

Pham, L., Limbu, Y. B., Bui, T. K., Nguyen, H. T., & Pham, H. T. (2019). Does e-learning service quality influence e-learning student satisfaction and loyalty? Evidence from Vietnam. *International journal of educational technology in higher education, 16*(1), 1-26. https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-019-0136-3

Prihanto, Y. J. N., & Annas, M. (2023). Analysis of the influence of e-learning service quality factors on student perceived value and student satisfaction, with implication to student loyalty. *Marketing of Scientific and Research Organizations, 48*(2), 81-110. https://doi.org/10.2478/minib-2023-0011

Rahayu, N., Dhiaullah, M., & Marsha, A. (2023). Utilizing e-learning and user loyalty with user satisfaction as mediating variable in public sector context. *International Journal of Data and Network Science, 7*(3), 1341-1348. http://dx.doi.org/10.5267/j.ijdns.2023.4.004

Ramanathan, U., Subramanian, N., Yu, W., & Vijaygopal, R. (2017). Impact of customer loyalty and service operations on customer behaviour and firm performance: empirical evidence from UK retail sector. *Production Planning & Control, 28*(6-8), 478-488. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09537287.2017.1309707

Ramovš, M., & Milfelner, B. (2023). The Importance of Educational Service Quality for Customer Satisfaction and Organizational Reputation. *Naše gospodarstvo/Our economy, 69*(2), 29-40. https://doi.org/10.2478/ngoe-2023-0009

Salleh, M.Z., Yunus, N.S., Ghani, N.M., Arifin, N., & Ali, A.M. (2018). The effectiveness of loyalty program towards customer loyalty. *Advances in Business Research International Journal, 4*(2), 63-68.

Schönberger, L., Graf, S., Saidi, S., Ziegenbein, D., & Hamann, A. (2022, March). Contract-based quality-of-service assurance in dynamic distributed systems. In *2022 Design, Automation & Test in Europe Conference & Exhibition (DATE)* (pp. 132-135). IEEE.

Shariffuddin, N. S. M., Azinuddin, M., Yahya, N. E., & Hanafiah, M. H. (2023). Navigating the tourism digital landscape: The interrelationship of online travel sites' affordances, technology readiness, online purchase intentions, trust, and E-loyalty. *Heliyon, 9*(8). E19135. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e19135

Suresh, N. V., & Bhavadharani, S. (2021). An Empirical Study on the Impact of Passenger Loyalty Program on Passenger Retention with Reference to Air India. *Productivity, 62*(1), 96-102.

Tănască, A., Purcărea, T., & Virgil, P. O. P. A. (2014). Quality in Service Industry and Customer Experience Management (CEM). Case study: Restaurant Industry. *Supply Chain Management Journal, 5*(1), 77-96.

Tashtoush, L. (2022, October). The Impact of Service Quality on Corporate Social Responsibility and Customer Citizenship Behavior in Telecommunication Companies. In *2022 International Conference on Data Analytics for Business and Industry (ICDABI)* (pp. 608-616). IEEE.

Tunç, T. (2022). the Impact of Marketing Innovation on Customer Loyalty: The Mediating Role of Brand Image and Customer Satisfaction (a Case Study in Chemical Industry). *Academic Review of Humanities and Social Sciences, 5*(2), 130-155. https://doi.org/10.54186/arhuss.1093211

Udayalakshmi, C., & Sridevi, J. (2023). Service quality models: A review with respect to fast food restaurants. *BOHR International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research, 2*(1), 92-96. https://doi.org/10.54646/bijsshr.2023.30

Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2004). Evolving to a new dominant logic for marketing. *Journal of marketing, 68*(1), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.68.1.1.24036

Veselinova, E., Miceski, T., & Gogova Samonikov, M. (2016). The corporate brand: An intangible resource as a basis for sustainable competitive advantage. *Journal of Economics, 1*(1), 1-12.

Wong, L. J., Ling, P. S., & Ling, T. H. Y. (2023). A conceptual framework for higher education student loyalty from the green marketing perspective. *Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning, 13*(2), 387-402. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/HESWBL-08-2022-0165

Yeboah-Asiamah, E., Quaye, D. M., & Nimako, S. G. (2016). The effects of lucky draw sales promotion on brand loyalty in mobile telecommunication industry. *African Journal of Economic and Management Studies, 7*(1), 109-123. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/AJEMS-09-2013-0076

Yusefi, A. R., Davarani, E. R., Daneshi, S., Bastani, M., Mehralian, G., & Bastani, P. (2022). Responsiveness level and its effect on services quality from the viewpoints of the older adults hospitalized during COVID-19 pandemic. *BMC geriatrics, 22*(1), 653. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-022-03344-5

Zeithaml, V. A. (2000). Service quality, profitability, and the economic worth of customers: what we know and what we need to learn. *Journal of the academy of marketing science, 28*, 67-85. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0092070300281007

Zhou, X. (2021, April). Research on Measurement and Use of Customer Value and Loyalty. In *2021 6th International Conference on Social Sciences and Economic Development (ICSSED 2021)* (pp. 411-415). Atlantis Press.

RMUTT Global Business Accounting and Finance Review (GBAFR)
Volume 8 Issue 2 : July - December 2024

THE IMPACT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN THE CADRE TRAINING AND CONFERENCE CENTER (HOTEL) IN XICHENG DISTRICT, BEIJING

Liang Gu[a], Chitralada Trisakhon[b*]

[a b] Thongsook College, Bangkok, Thailand
* Corresponding author's e-mail: ap.chitralada@thongsook.ac.th

Received: 14 September 2024 / Revised: 12 November 2024 / Accepted: 17 December 2024

ABSTRACT

Purpose – The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of human resource management practices on employee performance at the Cadre Training and Conference Center (Hotel) in Xicheng District, Beijing. The unique challenges of HRM in the hospitality sector within a government-operated facility, which operates under different structural and operational constraints compared to private sector hotels.

Methodology – This study involves surveying 180 employees at the Cadre Training and Conference Center in Beijing, selected through stratified random sampling. A questionnaire was used to gather data on human resource management practices and employee performance, covering three main sections: respondent information, HRM practices, and performance metrics. Data analysis includes descriptive statistics for initial data review and inferential statistics using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test hypotheses, with a significance level set at 0.05.

Results – human resource management practices, particularly in the areas of recruitment and selection, reward system, career management and performance appraisal, have a statistically significant influence on employee performance at Cadre Training and Conference Center (Hotel) in Xicheng District, Beijing, with a predictive power of 83.3%.

Implications – The study suggests key implications for enhancing employee performance. Companies should improve performance appraisal systems to ensure fairness, transparency, and alignment with organizational goals. Recruitment processes should be thorough and transparent, attracting the right talent and supporting employee integration. A fair and well-communicated reward system is essential for maintaining motivation, and companies should offer additional benefits to meet employee needs. Lastly, clear career management strategies should be implemented to support employee growth, with regular monitoring to align career development with organizational goals.

Originality/Value – This study offers new insights into how specific HRM practices—recruitment, reward systems, career management, and performance appraisals—significantly impact employee performance in the hospitality sector. It provides practical recommendations for improving HR strategies, making it valuable for HR professionals and managers in similar settings.

Keywords: Human resource management practices, Employee performance, Hotel

Research Type: Research Article

Citation:
Gu, L., & Trisakhon, C. (2024). The impact of human resource management practices on employee performance in the cadre training and conference center (hotel) in Xicheng district, Beijing. RMUTT Global Business Accounting and Finance Review, 8(2), 46-57. https://doi.org/10.60101/gbafr.2024.276326

INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Development (HRD) plays a crucial role in enhancing employee performance and driving business success, particularly in the service industry where service quality and customer satisfaction are vital. Effective HRD strategies significantly influence operational efficiency and provide a competitive edge (Bratton et al. 2021). The Cadre Training and Conference Center, also known as the Xiyuyuan Conference and Resort Center, exemplifies a facility where the strategic implementation of HRD could substantially impact overall service quality and employee performance.

The Cadre Training and Conference Center, located in the serene northern area of Taoyukou Reservoir Natural Scenic Area, approximately 30 kilometers from the Asian Games Center, is a comprehensive facility built by the Xicheng District Government. With 124 rooms, including standard double rooms, triple rooms, and luxurious suites, the center provides a blend of natural beauty and modern amenities that are conducive to relaxation and productivity (Beijing Tourism Bureau, 2023). The center is equipped with high-end amenities such as air conditioning, programmable telephones, surveillance TV, and an efficient security system to ensure guests' comfort and safety.

In addition to accommodation, the training and conference center offers a wide range of services, including catering, entertainment, and fitness. The center's entertainment and fitness club, spanning 5,500 square meters, includes a swimming pool, sauna, tennis court, and bowling alley, which reflect its commitment to providing a comprehensive and unique guest experience. However, despite these luxurious facilities, the center faces challenges related to HRM practices, which impact its ability to maintain high service standards.

The strategic importance of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices in such environments is paramount. HRM encompasses various critical functions, including recruitment, training, performance evaluation, compensation management, and employee relations, all designed to enhance employees' capabilities and align them with organizational goals (Dessler, 2020; Armstrong, 2014). However, recent data indicates significant challenges in maintaining consistent employee performance at the center. Reports have shown high turnover rates and discrepancies in performance levels among employees, despite standardized compensation packages. For instance, between 2019 and 2023, the center experienced a turnover rate increase of 15%, and employee performance metrics, such as customer satisfaction scores, declined by 10% during the same period. These issues underscore the necessity of investigating how HRM practices can be optimized to improve employee retention and performance.

The decision to focus this study on the Cadre Training and Conference Center is driven by its unique position as a government-invested facility, which presents different challenges compared to privately-owned establishments like the nearby Beijing Jingzhihu Resort Hotel. Government-operated centers often face additional bureaucratic hurdles, differences in HRM practices, and distinct employee expectations. These factors make the Cadre Training and Conference Center an ideal case study for examining the impact of HRM practices in a public sector context.

In conclusion, this study seeks to fill the research gap by analyzing how HRM practices affect employee performance at the Cadre Training and Conference Center. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for hotel management, offering a guideline for implementing HRM strategies that can enhance employee performance and overall service quality. Moreover, the research will contribute to the broader understanding of HRM in the service industry, especially in settings that merge natural tranquility with modern amenities (Wright & McMahan, 2011; Guest, 2011). The insights gained will not only benefit the Cadre Training and Conference Center but also have broader implications for HRM practices across the service industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Human Resource Management Practices

Human Resource Management (HRM) practices have evolved in response to changes in the business environment, such as advancements in information technology, economic conditions, and increased competition. HRM practices aim to create competitive advantages and support organizational success by aligning efficient human resource management systems with the organization's objectives. Scholars have extensively defined HRM as the systematic management of human resources to enhance organizational performance, reduce turnover, and promote employee retention. Key HRM activities include human resource planning, recruitment, selection, training and development, compensation and benefits, safety and health management, and labor relations, all of which are essential for improving employee performance and ensuring organizational sustainability (Okolie & Udom, 2019; Boon et al., 2019; Giancaspro et al., 2021).

Empirical studies have shown a strong correlation between effective HRM systems and organizational success. For instance, Okolie and Udom (2019) demonstrated that HRM practices positively impacted employee productivity and engagement, leading to higher profitability and growth within organizations. Similarly, research by Boon et al. (2019) indicated that organizations implementing structured HRM practices, such as comprehensive training and competitive compensation, reported a significant improvement in employee commitment and retention rates. These findings underscore the effectiveness of HRM systems in fostering a productive workforce aligned with organizational goals. Additionally, Giancaspro et al. (2021) identified that strategic HRM practices, including talent management and performance evaluations, contribute to long-term organizational sustainability by creating a culture of continuous improvement and employee empowerment.

Theoretical concepts related to HRM practices further emphasize the importance of critical processes for managing human capital. This includes human resource planning to meet organizational needs, recruiting and selecting suitable candidates, and continuously developing employees through training and career planning. A well-designed reward system, which includes both financial and non-financial incentives, plays a vital role in motivating employees and fostering commitment. Additionally, performance appraisals provide feedback to employees and support career advancement, helping align individual goals with organizational objectives. Through these HRM practices, organizations can attract, retain, and develop talented personnel, thereby enhancing organizational performance and ensuring long-term sustainability (Saifalislam et al., 2014; Panjaitan et al., 2023; Lionel et al., 2023).

Employee Performance

Employee performance, or work efficiency, is often synonymous with job performance. Scholars define employee work efficiency as the ability to deliver work that meets organizational objectives with quality, speed, accuracy, and cost-effectiveness. Efficient employees complete tasks according to set standards, producing maximum benefit with minimum resources. Key elements of work efficiency include the individual's willingness, discipline, responsibility, and loyalty to the organization. For example, Koljaana and Rahadi (2022) emphasized that work efficiency involves producing quality results in a timely and economical manner. Other scholars, such as Rivaldo and Nabella (2023), note that work efficiency is the ability to use knowledge and skills to meet organizational goals, while Bushiri (2014) highlights minimal time and energy waste as hallmarks of efficient performance. In summary, employee work efficiency refers to achieving objectives quickly through effective operations, resource optimization, and adherence to standards (Zhenjing et al., 2022; Koljaana & Rahadi, 2022; Rivaldo & Nabella, 2023; Bushiri, 2014).

Several factors influence work efficiency, including organizational structure, the use of modern technology, employee motivation, and job satisfaction. Nguyen et al. (2020) identified eight key factors that drive work efficiency, such as the use of performance indicators, empowerment of frontline staff, and flatter organizational structures. Additionally, Mamun and Khan (2020) emphasize the importance of motivation and job satisfaction in achieving high performance, stating that satisfied employees are more likely to be efficient. Cera and Kusaku (2020) add that a well-defined strategy, an appropriate organizational structure, and strong leadership also contribute to increased work efficiency. Furthermore, personal characteristics like knowledge, skills, and psychological traits play a role in determining individual performance (Triansyah et al., 2023). In conclusion, work efficiency is influenced by both organizational and individual factors, and improving these elements can lead to better employee performance and organizational success (Nguyen et al., 2020; Mamun & Khan, 2020; Cera & Kusaku, 2020; Triansyah et al., 2023).

Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

Human Resource Management (HRM) practices significantly impact employee performance and work efficiency. HRM involves managing human resources through policies and practices such as recruitment, training, reward systems, career management, and performance appraisals. These practices influence employees' motivation, behavior, and overall performance. Effective HRM fosters higher employee satisfaction, enhances work efficiency, and leads to better organizational outcomes. For example, recruitment directly influences employee performance by selecting qualified personnel with the right skills and attitudes, which in turn increases work efficiency and strengthens organizational culture (Kaufman, 2015; Saifalislam et al., 2014; Alsafad & Altahat, 2021).

Each HRM practice plays a crucial role in shaping employee performance. Recruitment, when well-executed, reduces turnover and promotes employee satisfaction, leading to improved performance. Training enhances employees' knowledge and skills, fostering job satisfaction, motivation, and work efficiency. The reward system motivates employees through recognition and fair compensation, contributing to higher dedication and productivity. Career management, in particular, has a long-term impact on employee retention by offering structured pathways for growth and development, which increases loyalty and reduces turnover. By investing in career development programs, organizations ensure that employees perceive clear career progression opportunities, thereby fostering commitment and retention. Lastly, performance appraisals identify areas for skill development and offer feedback, which boosts motivation, job satisfaction, and work efficiency.

These practices collectively ensure that organizations maintain a high level of performance and competitiveness. In the long run, well-designed career management and development programs contribute not only to individual employee growth but also to the organization’s stability by cultivating a workforce that is both committed and highly skilled (Oyadiran et al., 2023; Mamaqi, 2023; Reddy, 2024; Bagdadli & Gianecchini, 2019; Dangol, 2020).

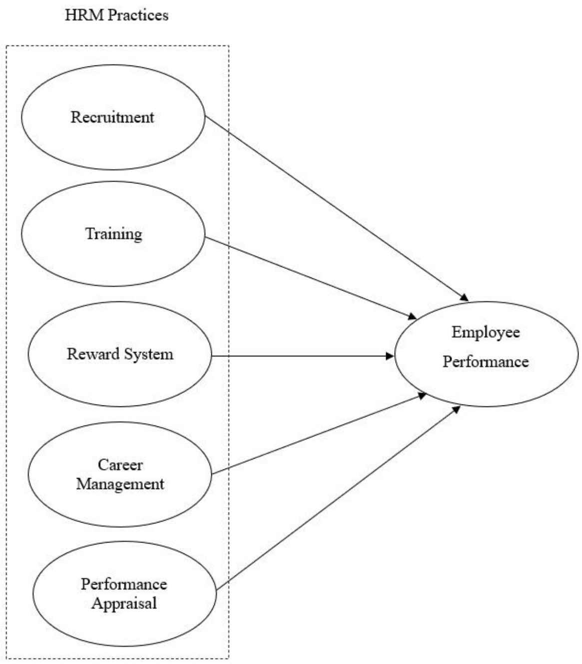


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework
Source: Author

Research Hypothesis

H1: Recruitment and selection influence employee performance.
H2: Training influence employee performance.
H3: Reward system influence employee performance.
H4: Career management influence employee performance.
H5: Performance appraisal influence employee performance.

METHODOLOGY

The population for this study consists of all 209 employees working at the Cadre Training and Conference Center (hotel) in Beijing's Xicheng District. To determine the appropriate sample size, this study utilizes the Partial Least Square (PLS) criteria, which is particularly suited for structural equation modeling when the goal is to explore complex relationships among variables. According to PLS guidelines, an appropriate sample size typically ranges from 100 to 200 participants, depending on the complexity of the model and the number of indicators being analyzed (Hair et al., 2017). Given this range and to ensure robust statistical power, the researchers have chosen to include the entire 180 employees as the sample. This approach not only meets the PLS criteria but also allows for a comprehensive analysis that is representative of the entire workforce at the Cadre Training and Conference Center. The stratified random sampling method was used to select the sample, grouping participants by department to ensure a representative distribution across different functional areas.

The research instrument used is a questionnaire developed from the study of concepts and theories related to the research objectives. The questionnaire was designed to collect data on human resource management practices and employee performance, divided into 3 parts as follows: (1) Questionnaire on general information of the respondents, (2) Questionnaire on human resource management practices, divided into 5 aspects: recruitment and selection, training, reward system, career management, and performance appraisal, and (3) Questionnaire on employee performance, divided into 3 aspects: quality, quantity, and time. The researcher presented the developed questionnaire to the advisor for accuracy verification, content correctness review, and consideration of additional recommendations to appropriately improve the questionnaire. After verification, the researcher added content validity testing by calculating the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) from 3 experts. Subsequently, the questionnaire was piloted with a sample size of 30, the same as the actual sample, to test reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which should be greater than 0.70 or 70% to be considered reliable. When testing reliability with a sample of 30 using statistical software, the questionnaire reliability analysis results can be checked as shown in Table 1.

In this research, data analysis and hypothesis testing were conducted using computer software. The analysis process is divided into descriptive statistics and inferential statistics as follows: (1) Descriptive Statistics: This step involves checking the preliminary data from the sample. The information such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. And (2) Inferential Statistics: Used to test the research hypotheses, with a statistical significance level set at 0.05. In this study, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to test the hypotheses. PLS-SEM is a statistical analysis technique that helps examine the complex relationships between the measurement model and the structural model.

Table 1. Results of the questionnaire reliability.

Variable	Number of Questions	Cronbach's Alpha
Human resource management practices		
- Recruitment	4	.713
- Training	4	.822
- Reward system	4	.814
- Career management	4	.843
- Performance appraisal	4	.865
Employee performance		
- Quality	4	.837
- Quantity	4	.880
- Time	4	.875

RESULTS

General Information Analysis of Respondents

the majority of respondents were female (100 people, 55.56%). Most were aged between 31 and 40 years (95 people, 52.78%). The majority were married or living together (103 people, 57.22%). Most respondents held a bachelor's degree (121 people, 67.22%). A significant portion had an average monthly income between 6,001 and 8,000 CNY (77 people, 42.78%), and 66 people (36.67%) had 2-5 years of work experience.

The Mean and Standard Deviation

Table 2. The mean and standard deviation.

Factors	$\bar{X}$	SD	Level of opinion
Human Resource Management Practices	3.99	0.65	High
- Recruitment and Selection	3.94	0.73	High
- Training	4.09	0.70	High
- Reward System	4.04	0.70	High
- Career Management	3.94	0.79	High
- Performance Appraisal	3.95	0.80	High
Employee Performance	3.95	0.75	High
- Quality	3.96	0.79	High
- Quantity	3.93	0.84	High
- Time	3.96	0.79	High

The Hypothesis Testing

Table 3. Shows the test results for structural integrity and component weight.

Factors	Loading	AVE	Dijkstra-Henseler's rho (ρA)	Jöreskog's rho (ρc)	Cronbach's alpha (α)
Recruitment and Selection		.559	.775	.832	.732
- X11	.557				
- X12	.824				
- X13	.839				
- X14	.735				
Training		.652	.823	.882	.822
- X21	.815				
- X22	.813				
- X23	.792				
- X24	.810				
Reward System		.646	.819	.880	.818
- X31	.808				
- X32	.828				
- X33	.780				
- X34	.799				
Career Management		.680	.844	.895	.843
- X41	.824				
- X42	.843				
- X43	.836				
- X44	.795				
Performance Appraisal		.713	.867	.909	.866
- X51	.842				
- X52	.850				
- X53	.854				
- X54	.833				
Employee Performance		.869	.925	.952	.925
- Quality (Y1)	.935				
- Quantity (Y2)	.928				
- Time (Y3)	.935				

From Table 3, it was found that all observed variables in the model have factor loading values greater than 0.5, ranging from 0.557 to 0.935, indicating their reliability in measurement. Dijkstra-Henseler's rho (ρA) values range from 0.775 to 0.925, Jöreskog's rho (ρc) ranges from 0.832 to 0.952, and Cronbach's alpha (α) falls within the range of 0.732 to 0.925. Importantly, all these values exceed the 0.7 threshold for reliability. Furthermore, the latent variables demonstrate discriminant validity with AVE values above 0.5, ranging from 0.559 to 0.869. This is in accordance with the established preliminary agreement (Henseler et al., 2016).

Table 4 Shows a comparison of discriminant validity according to the Fornell-Larcker criterion.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Recruitment and Selection[1]	**.748**					
Training[2]	.500	**.807**				
Reward System[3]	.497	.483	**.804**			
Career Management[4]	.360	.495	.548	**.825**		
Performance Appraisal[5]	.513	.502	.585	.660	**.844**	
Employee Performance[6]	.585	.468	.624	.619	.772	**.932**

* Note: The values on the diagonal are √AVE.

From Table 4, it was found that the model has discriminant validity, as indicated by the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) being higher than the correlations (r) of each latent variable. This is consistent with the criteria established by Henseler et al. (2016), which state that each latent variable should not be more strongly correlated with another latent variable than the square root of its AVE.

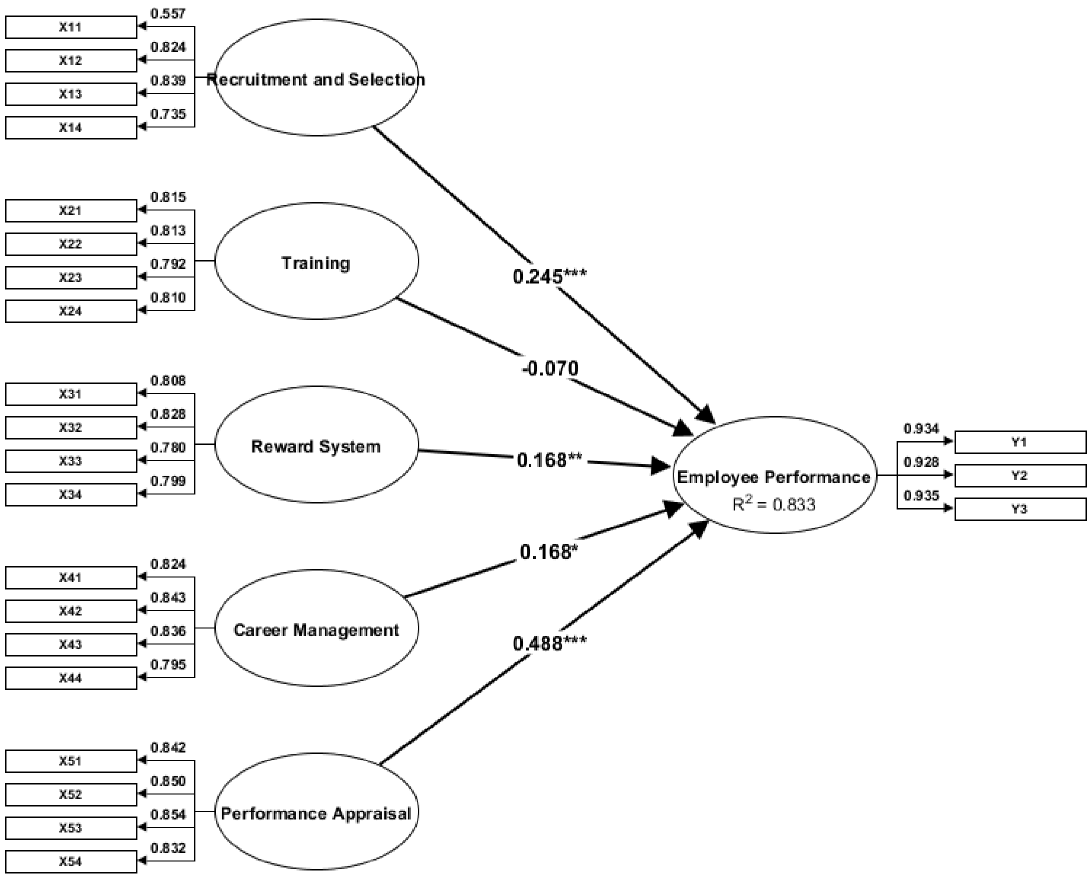


Figure 2. Shows the results of hypothesis testing.

Table 5. Shows the effects of human resource management practices on employee performance.

Human Resource Management Practices	Employee Performance			
	Beta	t-test	p-value	Cohen's F^2
- Recruitment and Selection	.245	3.669	.000***	0.135
- Training	-.070	-1.284	.100	0.011
- Reward System	.168	2.814	.003**	0.054
- Career Management	.168	2.341	.011*	0.048
- Performance Appraisal	.488	5.421	.000***	0.346

*** Statistical significance at .001 level
** Statistical significance at .01 level
* Statistical significance at .05 level

From Table 5, it was found that human resource management practices had a statistically significant influence on employee performance at the Cadre Training and Conference Center (Hotel) in Xicheng District, Beijing, with a predictive power of 83.3% (R^2 = 0.833). The influences are arranged in the following order:

1. Performance Appraisal has a significant influence on employee performance at the Cadre Training and Conference Center (Hotel) in Xicheng District, Beijing, at the .000 level, with an influence level of .488 (β = .488) and a Cohen's F^2 value of .346.

2. Recruitment and Selection had a statistically significant influence on employee performance at the Cadre Training and Conference Center (Hotel) in Xicheng District, Beijing, at the .000 level, with an influence level of .245 (β = .245) and a Cohen's F^2 value of .135.

3. Reward System has a statistically significant influence on employee performance at the Cadre Training and Conference Center (Hotel) in Xicheng District, Beijing, at the .003 level, with an influence level of .168 (β = .168) and a Cohen's F^2 value of 0.054.

4. Career Management has a statistically significant influence on employee performance at the Cadre Training and Conference Center (Hotel) in Xicheng District, Beijing, at the .011 level, with an influence level of .168 (β = .168) and a Cohen's F^2 value of 0.048.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study underscore the significant impact of human resource management (HRM) practices on employee performance at the Cadre Training and Conference Center in Beijing. Among the various HRM practices analyzed, performance appraisal emerged as the most influential factor. A well-structured and transparent appraisal system not only clarifies job expectations but also motivates employees to enhance their skills and capabilities. The study highlights that employees perceive appraisals as fair when the process is clear and unbiased, which in turn boosts morale and overall performance. This finding aligns with previous research by Setiawati and Ariani (2019), who emphasized that performance appraisals are crucial for employee development and organizational commitment. Additionally, clear and constructive feedback from supervisors was found to be a key factor in enabling employees to identify their strengths and areas for improvement, contributing to their professional growth. However, some employees reported receiving insufficient feedback, suggesting that the organization should focus on providing more detailed and regular performance reviews to maximize the positive impact of appraisals on employee performance.

Recruitment and selection was identified as the second most important HRM practice affecting employee performance. A systematic and transparent recruitment process helps attract candidates whose qualifications closely align with the organization's needs, thereby ensuring that new hires can perform effectively from the outset. The study found that employees at the Cadre Training and Conference Center appreciated the thoroughness of the recruitment process, which they viewed as transparent and fair. This finding is consistent with Hamza et al. (2021), who noted that effective recruitment practices reduce turnover and enhance long-term job performance. However, despite the positive feedback, some respondents suggested that improvements could be made to make the process more flexible and efficient. This indicates that while the recruitment system is generally effective, there may be a need for further optimization to ensure it remains competitive and continues to attract top talent.

The reward system also plays an important role in influencing employee performance, though it ranked slightly lower in impact compared to performance appraisal and recruitment. A fair and transparent reward system is essential for motivating employees and recognizing their efforts. The study found that employees at the Cadre Training and Conference Center generally viewed the reward system as fair and well-communicated, which helped reinforce their trust in the organization's processes. However, non-monetary benefits, such as health insurance and investment opportunities, were perceived as lacking by some employees, highlighting an area where the organization could improve. According to Chen (2023), rewards that are more directly tied to employee performance, such as salary adjustments or bonuses, tend to be more effective in encouraging employees to work harder and develop their skills. Therefore, the organization may benefit from refining its reward system to offer more performance-based incentives and expanding the range of benefits to better meet employee needs.

Lastly, career management was found to have the least impact on employee performance, although it remains a critical factor for long-term employee satisfaction and development. While some employees acknowledged that the organization provides opportunities for career growth, such as promotions and skills development, others felt that there was insufficient guidance and support from line managers and the HR department. This finding is consistent with research by Bagdadli and Gianecchini (2019), who highlighted the importance of career management in fostering employee commitment and improving performance. The lack of adequate career development support suggests that the Cadre Training and Conference Center could enhance its career management strategies by providing more structured guidance and clearer pathways for career progression. Employees who feel that they have a future within the organization and opportunities for advancement are more likely to remain committed and perform at a higher level. Regular monitoring and evaluation of career development initiatives would help ensure that these strategies align with both organizational goals and employee aspirations, leading to improved job satisfaction and performance over time.

In conclusion, the study highlights the critical role that HRM practices play in shaping employee performance at the Cadre Training and Conference Center. Performance appraisal, recruitment and selection, the reward system, and career management each contribute to employee effectiveness, with performance appraisal being the most impactful. Organizations can improve employee performance by refining these HRM practices, particularly by enhancing transparency, providing clear feedback, offering competitive rewards, and supporting career development. These improvements would not only enhance employee satisfaction but also strengthen the organization’s overall productivity and success. To implement these findings effectively, HR managers should enhance performance appraisal systems by ensuring transparency and providing constructive feedback, while also training supervisors on effective feedback methods. Additionally, refining recruitment processes with clear criteria aligned with organizational goals can improve the quality of hires and reduce turnover. HR managers should also optimize reward systems by introducing both monetary and non-monetary rewards that are competitive and regularly reviewing compensation packages to retain talent. Strengthening career development programs through structured career paths and skill development opportunities can further boost long-term employee commitment and engagement. These actionable strategies will assist HR managers in translating the study’s insights into practical steps, fostering a motivated and high-performing workforce that supports organizational success.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES

This study, while providing valuable insights into the impact of human resource management practices on employee performance, has certain limitations. One of the primary limitations is its focus on a single organization, the Cadre Training and Conference Center in Beijing. This limited scope may affect the generalizability of the findings to other industries or regions, particularly those with different organizational structures or cultures. Additionally, the study primarily relies on self-reported data from employees, which may introduce bias or inaccuracies in the responses. The cross-sectional nature of the study also limits the ability to observe changes in employee performance over time or in response to evolving HR practices.

Organizational structure, the integration of modern technology, employee motivation, and job satisfaction are critical factors in enhancing employee performance. These components serve as a foundation to foster an environment conducive to high performance. The effective use of technology, especially digital tools and AI-driven platforms, is increasingly essential in contemporary workplaces, providing employees with resources that streamline processes, improve communication, and facilitate more efficient task completion.

For future research, several promising areas have been identified. First, further investigation into the development of new skills and continuous training in different areas could provide insights into how ongoing employee development influences performance and readiness to face professional challenges. Second, exploring the relationship between organizational culture and employee performance, particularly in cultures that promote creativity, teamwork, and adaptability, would offer a deeper understanding of how workplace environments can enhance performance. Lastly, a critical area for expansion involves examining the impact of modern technologies, especially digital and AI-based solutions, on employee performance in digitalized work environments. This exploration could help organizations understand how advanced technology influences productivity, efficiency, and job satisfaction. Additionally, studying the impact of various leadership styles, such as autocratic, open, and creative leadership, on employee performance in different contexts would help identify which leadership approaches are most effective in motivating employees and driving organizational success. These areas of research would not only complement the findings of this study but also offer broader insights into how HRM practices can be further optimized for diverse organizational settings.

CONCLUSION

This study provides key insights into the impact of human resource management (HRM) practices on employee performance at the Cadre Training and Conference Center in Beijing. The findings reveal that performance appraisal, recruitment and selection, reward systems, and career management are crucial for enhancing employee performance. Performance appraisal was identified as the most influential factor, emphasizing the importance of transparent evaluation processes that support employee development through clear feedback. Recruitment and selection also play a significant role in aligning talent with organizational goals, thereby reducing turnover. The study highlights the importance of a fair and transparent reward system to motivate employees, suggesting that integrating non-monetary incentives could further enhance satisfaction and retention. Career management, while less impactful in this context, is essential for long-term engagement and development. Organizations are encouraged to provide structured career paths to reinforce employee commitment and performance over time. For HR professionals, this study underscores the need to continuously refine HRM practices, focusing on fair appraisals, strategic recruitment, transparent rewards, and effective career development frameworks. These elements not only improve employee outcomes but also contribute to greater organizational productivity and success.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest found in this research.

REFERENCES

Alsafad, Y., & Altahat, S. (2021). Human resource management practices and employee performance: The role of job satisfaction. *Journal of Asian Finance Economics and Business, 8*(1), 519-529. http://dx.doi.org/10.13106/jafeb.2021.vol8.no1.519

Armstrong, M. (2014). *Armstrong's handbook of human resource management practice* (13th ed.). Kogan Page.

Bagdadli, S. & Gianecchini, M. (2019). Organizational career management practices and objective career success: A systematic review and framework. *Human Resource Management Review, 29*(3), 353-370. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2018.08.001

Beijing Tourism Bureau. (2023). *Annual tourism report.* Beijing Publishing House.

Boon, C., Den Hartog, D. N., & Lepak, D. P. (2019). A systematic review of human resource management systems and their measurement. *Journal of Management, 45*(6), 2498–2537. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206318818718

Bratton, J., Gold, J., Bratton, A., & Steele, L. (2021). *Human resource management.* Bloomsbury Publishing.

Bushiri, C. P. (2014). *The impact of working environment on employees' performance: The case of institute of finance management in Dar Es Salaam Region* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. The Open University of Tanzania.

Cera, E., & Kusaku, A. (2020). Factors influencing organizational performance: Work environment, training-development, management and organizational culture. *European Journal of Economics and Business Studies,* 6(1), 16-27. https://doi.org/10.26417/ejes.v6i1.p16-27

Chen, Z. (2023). The influence of school's reward systems on students' development. *Journal of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, 8*, 1822-1827. https://doi.org/10.54097/ehss.v8i.4591

Dangol, P. (2020). Role of performance appraisal system and its impact on employees motivation. *Quantitative Economics and Management Studies, 2*(1), 13-26. https://doi.org/10.35877/454RI.qems119

Dessler, G. (2020). *Human resource management* (16th ed.). Pearson.

Giancaspro, M. L., Manuti, A., Lo Presti, A. & De Rosa, A. (2021). Human resource management practices perception and career success: The mediating roles of employability and extra-role behaviours. *Sustainability, 13*, 1-16. https://doi.org/10.3390/su132111834

Guest, D. E. (2011). Human resource management and performance: Still searching for some answers. *Human Resource Management Journal, 21*(1), 3-13. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1748-8583.2010.00164.x

Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2017). *A primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.

Hamza, P. A., Othman, B. J., Gardi, B., Sorguli, S., Aziz, H. M., Ahmed, S. A., Sabir, B. Y., Ismael, N. B., Ali, B. J., & Anwar, G. (2021). Recruitment and selection: The relationship between recruitment and selection with organizational performance. *International Journal of Engineering, Business and Management, 5*(3), 1-13. http://dx.doi.org/10.22161/ijebm.5.3.1

Henseler, J., Hubona, G., & Ray, P. A. (2016). Using PLS path modeling in new technology research: updated guidelines. *Industrial management & data systems, 116*(1), 2-20. https://doi.org/10.1108/IMDS-09-2015-0382

Kaufman, B. E. (2015), Market competition, HRM, and firm performance: The conventional paradigm critiqued and reformulated. *Human Resource Management Review, 25*(1), 107-125. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2014.08.001

Koljaana, C. A., & Rahadi, D. R. (2022). Employee performance affects the compensation provided by the company. *International Journal of Business Studies, 6*(1), 112-117. https://doi.org/10.32924/ijbs.v6i1.191

Lionel, L. K. G., Channuwong, S., & Wongmajarapinya, K. (2023). Human resource management and organizational performance. *International Journal of Advanced Research, 11*(5), 872-881. https://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/16940

Mamaqi, E. (2023). The role of trainings in the development and enhancement of work performance in the public and private sector. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research and Development, 10*(1), 107-111. http://dx.doi.org/10.56345/ijrdv10n1s115

Mamun, M. Z. A., & Khan, M. Y. H. (2020). A theoretical study on factors influencing employees performance, rewards and motivation within organization. *Socio Economic Challenges, 4*(3), 114-124. https://doi.org/10.21272/sec.4(3).113-124.2020

Nguyen, P. T., Yandi, A., & Mahaputra, M. R. (2020). Factors that influence employee performance: Motivation, leadership, environment, culture organization, work achievement, competence and compensation (a study of human resource management literature studies). *Dinasti International Journal of Digital Business Management, 1*(4), 645-662.

Okolie, U. C. & Udom, I. D. (2019). Challenges of HRM in a global business environment: A review and research agenda. *International Journal of New Economics and Social Sciences, 1*(9), 181-194. http://dx.doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0013.3042

Oyadiran, P. A., Ishaq, M. F., & Kola, A. A. (2023). Effects of recruitment and selection process on performance in organizations. *International Journal of Human Resource Management and Humanities, 1*(1), 1-26.

Panjaitan, E. H. H., Rupianti, R., Sukomardojo, T., Astuti, A. R. T., & Sutardjo, A. (2023). The role of human resource management in improving employee performance in private companies. *KOMITMEN: Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen, 4*(1), 225-233. http://dx.doi.org/10.15575/jim.v4i1.23958

Reddy, S. S. (2024). A study on reward system of employees in an organization. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts, 12*(1), 399-413.

Rivaldo, Y., & Nabella, S. D. (2023). Employee performance: Education, training, experience and work discipline. *Quality - Access to Success, 24*(193), 182-188. https://doi.org/10.47750/QAS/24.193.20

Saifalislam, K. M., Osman, A., & AlQudah, M. K. (2014). Human resource management practices: Influence of recruitment and selection, and training and development on the organizational performance of the Jordanian Public University. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management, 16*(5), 43-46. http://dx.doi.org/10.9790/487X-16554346

Setiawati, T. & Ariani, I. D. (2019). Influence of performance appraisal fairness and job satisfaction through commitment on job performance. *Review of Integrative Business and Economics Research, 9*(3), 133-151.

Triansyah, A, F., Hejin, W., & Stefania, S. (2023). Factors affecting employee performance: A systematic review. *Journal Markcount Finance, 1*(3)150-159. https://doi.org/10.55849/jmf.v1i2.102

Wright, P. M., & McMahan, G. C. (2011). Exploring human capital: Putting 'human' back into strategic human resource management. *Human Resource Management Journal, 21*(2), 93-104. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1748-8583.2010.00165.x

Zhenjing, G., Chupradit, S., Ku, K. Y., Nassani, A. A., & Haffar, M. (2022). Impact of employees' workplace environment on employees' performance: A multi-mediation model. *Frontiers in Public Health, 10*, 1-13. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2022.890400

RMUTT Global Business Accounting and Finance Review (GBAFR)
Volume 8 Issue 2 : July - December 2024

GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRITOURISM MARKETING

Siripatsorn Bhuwakietkumjohn[a] , Panisa Mechinda[a*]

[a] Faculty of Business Administration, Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi, Pathum Thani, Thailand
[*]Corresponding author's e-mail: panisa_m@rmutt.ac.th

Received: 9 November 2024 / Revised: 9 December 2024 / Accepted: 24 December 2024

ABSTRACT

Purpose – The objectives of this research are (1) to compare perceived competitiveness dimensions and behavioral intentions of tourists from two major agritourism destinations in Prachinburi, (2) to explore whether tourists with different travel behavior (e.g., number of visits, travel companion) perceive competitive dimensions differently as well as (3) to develop guidelines for enhancing competitiveness of those destination using the results from previously mentioned objectives. The sample group consisted of 620 on-site agritourists visiting Prachinburi Province, with 310 participants allocated to each of the two destinations: Phumbhubejhr and Mai Khed Farmstay.

Methodology – Quota random sampling and accidental sampling methods were applied. Data was collected through questionnaires, and the hypotheses were tested using a one-sample t-test and an independent samples t-test. At Phumbhubejhr, most respondents are female (64.52%), with three-quarters (75.81%) aged 26-58. About 60% hold a bachelor's degree, and most work in government, state enterprises, or private businesses. Income levels are evenly distributed. For Mai Khed farmstay, most respondents are male (70.32%), with nearly two-thirds (65.48%) aged 26-58. Most (84.52%) have a college degree or lower, with many employed (42.58%) or running businesses (26.45%). Income levels are also evenly distributed.

Results – The results revealed that Phumbhubejhr demonstrates stronger competitiveness across all dimensions compared to Mai Khed. Regarding the second objective, tourists having different travel behavior significantly have different perceptions toward destination competitiveness. Repeat visitors have a stronger appreciation for its inherited resources and management, while first-time visitors to Phumbhubejhr are impressed by its created resources and infrastructure. Additionally, traveling with family/friends appears to enhance the visitor experience and competitiveness ratings across both destinations, suggesting that the social context of the visit plays a role in shaping positive perceptions and loyalty intentions. These findings can guide targeted strategies for improving visitor satisfaction and encouraging repeat visits for different visitor groups.

Implications – Phumbhubejhr should promote unique resources like its herb garden and historic buildings while maintaining service quality, and Mai Khed should enhance facilities and recreational offerings. Both should use loyalty programs for repeat visitors, targeted campaigns for first-time tourists, and family-friendly packages. Flexible itineraries for group tours and social-focused marketing can boost appeal and foster sustainable agritourism growth.

Originality/Value – This research fills theoretical gaps by focusing on destination competitiveness in non-European countries and emphasizing unique regional and industry-specific dimensions. It integrates underexplored behavioral factors, such as travel companions and visit frequency, into competitiveness models. By addressing variations between first-time and repeat visitors, it offers new insights for tailoring destination strategies to diverse visitor profiles.

Keywords: Destination competitiveness, Behavioral intention, Travel behavior, Agritourism

Paper Type: Research Article

Citation:
Bhuwakietkumjohna, S., & Mechinda, P. (2024). Guidelines for the development of agritourism marketing.
RMUTT Global Business Accounting and Finance Review, 8(2), 58-84. https://doi.org/10.60101/gbafr.2024.277371

INTRODUCTION

In the highly competitive tourism industry, understanding the strengths and weaknesses of destinations is crucial for maintaining and enhancing their attractiveness to travelers (Pearce, 1997). At the business level, maintaining destination competitiveness is essential for preserving market share and achieving a strong market position (Pike & Page, 2014; Dwyer & Kim, 2003). Research indicates a positive relationship between destination competitiveness and desirable outcomes, such as repeat visits and positive recommendations (Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Chen & Phou, 2013). Ultimately, this fosters true destination loyalty or customer-based brand equity (Wong, 2015). Therefore, to enhance or sustain competitiveness, tourism managers must assess their competitive positions and identify their strengths and weaknesses relative to competitors (Gomezelj & Mihalič, 2008).

Agritourism allows destinations to stand out in competitive markets by introducing unique and authentic experiences. By incorporating local agricultural practices, traditional lifestyles, and regional cuisines, agritourism adds tremendous value to the destination's overall appeal (Carpio et al., 2008) as well as enhances the destination’s unique identity and competitive positioning (Lane, 1994). Agritourism activities, such as farm tours, cooking classes, or harvest experiences, encourage tourists to spend more time at the destination. Visitors who connect emotionally with these experiences are more likely to return, boosting the destination’s long-term competitiveness (Barbieri, 2013). By integrating agriculture and tourism, agritourism generates additional income for farmers, creates jobs, and supports rural development. These economic benefits contribute to the destination’s overall competitiveness (Tew & Barbieri, 2012).

RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE & RESEARCH PROBLEM

According to Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau. (2023), the global agritourism market is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 18% from 2019 to 2023, reflecting increasing global interest in agritourism activities. Moreover, in 2016, agritourism activities generated approximately 1.86 billion baht from domestic tourists and 12 billion baht from international visitors (Responsible Tourism in Thailand, 2016).

Agriculture sector has been the main industry for Thailand as the lands are suitable for cultivation. Nowadays, many agricultural sites have been developed into tourist attractions that can support several types of tourism including rural tourism, ecotourism and agritourism. In addition, agricultural products such as tropical fruits like durian and mangosteen highlight the country's rich agricultural heritage and serve as compelling attractions for tourists (Chomchalow, & Na Songkhla, 2008). Furthermore, through an integration between traditional farming methods and local lifestyles, agritourism provides authentic experiences for tourists who seek a deeper cultural connection (Khamung, 2015). As a result, agritourism help enhance the destination's brand image as well as destination competitiveness (Madhyamapurush et al., 2021).

Prachinburi Province, located in the central region of Thailand, is characterized by diverse geography and a strong focus on agriculture and health tourism (Prachinburi Provincial Office, 2023). It is also one of four provinces designated as an herbal city by the Ministry of Public Health. The province’s five-year development plan emphasizes promoting eco-tourism, eco-industry, and safe agriculture while fostering economic stability for local communities. Its vision is outlined as “Prachinburi: A livable city with eco-tourism and eco-industrial zones, safe agriculture, Thai traditional medicine, and globally recognized herbal products.” Furthermore, one of its missions is to promote and maintain the quality of eco-tourism (agritourism) for sustainable outcomes (Prachinburi Provincial Office, 2023). Thus, agritourism has become a significant focus for Prachinburi.

Despite that, according to the Provincial Government Center of Prachinburi, Prachinburi has consistently ranked fifth among the five eastern provinces of Thailand in terms of its revenue from domestic tourists during the years 2019 to 2023, except for 2020. As shown in Table 1, the data indicated the needs for conducting destination competitiveness’s study in Prachinburi to boost its revenues comparing to other provinces in the same geographic region.

Table 1. Proportion of Revenues from Domestic Tourists: Comparison among Five Eastern Provinces of Thailand from 2019-2023

	Chantaburi % (ranking)	Trad % (ranking)	Nakornnayok % (ranking)	Prachinburi % (ranking)	Srakaew % (ranking)	Eastern Provinces
2019	21(2)	30 (1)	20(3)	13(5)	16(4)	100
2020	20(3)	35(1)	12(4)	25(2)	8(5)	100
2021	24(2)	32(1)	22(3)	6(5)	16(4)	100
2022	20(2)	37(1)	15(4)	12(5)	16(3)	100
2023	41 (1)	28 (2)	12(3)	9(5)	10(4)	100

Note: (1) Data adapted the Provincial Government Center of Prachinburi (Prachinburi Provincial Office, 2023)
(2) The values outside the parentheses represent the proportion of revenue generated by domestic tourists, while the values inside the parentheses indicate the ranking based on this proportion.
(3) The years 2020-2021 correspond to the COVID period, while 2022 and onwards reflect the normal period with no travel restrictions.

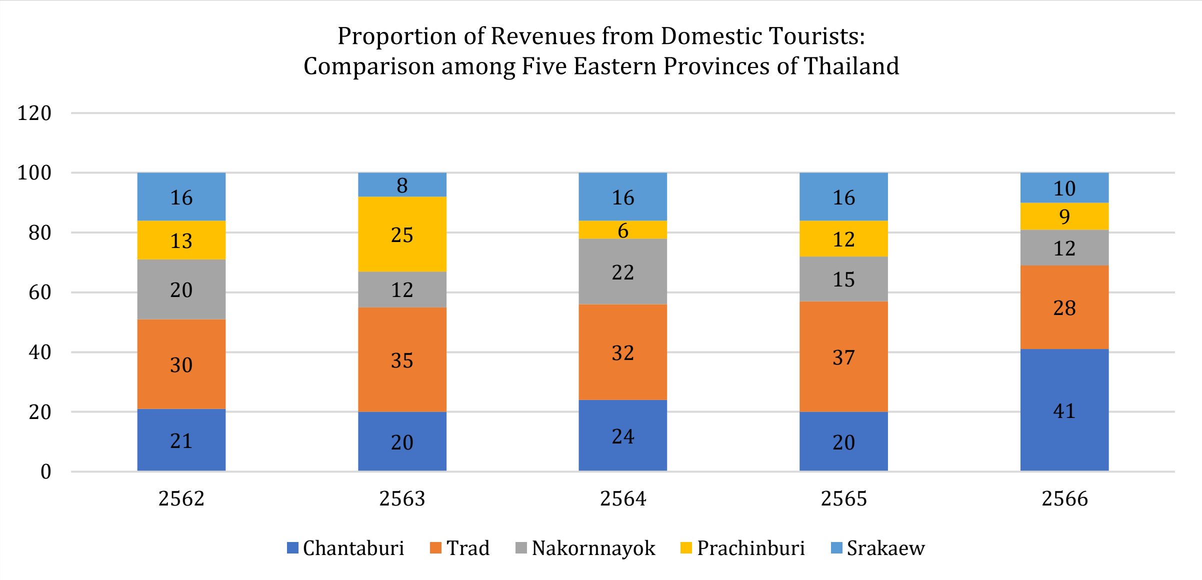


Figure 1. Proportion of Revenues from Domestic Tourists: Comparison among Five Eastern Provinces of Thailand

In this study, two major agritourism destinations were selected. First, Phumbhubejhr, a former residence for King Rama V when he visited the province. The building represents a blend of European and Thai architectural styles and now functions as a museum dedicated to traditional Thai medicine. Its distinctive design makes it a notable landmark in the region (Tourism Authority of Thailand, n.d.). Apart from the building, it has an herb garden organized by medicinal uses and provides services such as educational activities, accommodation, and a café (https://thai.tourismthailand.org/ Attraction/). This destination focuses on wellness tourism with zones dedicated to herbal education and cultural preservation, aligning with the created resources and destination management. These features are considered one dimension of destination competitiveness and hypothesized to significantly influence tourists' satisfaction and revisiting intentions. The second destination is Mai Khed Farmstay, which was established in 2002. This destination offers visitors immersive experience in durian farming, allowing guests to stay on-site and participate in various agricultural activities which also correspond to destination competitiveness.

Both sites were selected because they align with Thailand's national tourism strategies to promote secondary cities, sustainability, and cultural preservation (National Tourism Policy Office, 2023). Their attractions also demonstrate alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations Development Programme, n.d.). These sites preserve cultural heritage and support the local economy, making them significant attractions to be investigated (Prachinburi Tourism Guide, n.d.).

However, each site has distinct unique selling propositions (USPs): Phumbhubejhr represents cultural and historical significance with its 100-year-old wooden house museum, herb garden, and ASEAN's largest collection of jars. These features align with inherited resources, offering insights into heritage tourism and educational tourism. Mai Khed Farmstay emphasizes natural and agricultural tourism, with its durian farm and diverse tropical fruits as well as immersive farm experiences. The Durian & Fruit Buffet and farm activities cater to the growing interest in experiential tourism. This contrast between cultural and natural attractions provides a unique opportunity to study how different types of tourism products influence perceptions of destination competitiveness. Thus, comparing the competitiveness of different destinations enables researchers and policymakers to identify key strengths and weaknesses of each destination (Crouch, 2011; Dwyer & Kim, 2003). It also provides insights into how destinations perform relative to competitors, allowing for more targeted strategies to enhance market positioning (Zhang et al., 2020; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003).

Apart from managerial contributions, this study addresses theoretical contributions. Firstly, as highlighted by Cronjé and du Plessis (2020), most destination competitiveness studies focused on European context, nevertheless, limited research has conducted in the Asia-Pacific region or developing countries. Furthermore, as Ritchie and Crouch (2010) argued, competitiveness factors vary across destinations and previous research discovered that different countries have key different competitiveness dimensions. Thus, it is essential for non-European countries to address their unique dimensions, particularly for tourism-dependent countries like Thailand. Secondly, apart from the needs for country-specific study, Roman et al., (2020) stress the importance of industry-specific study as well. As most studies discovered different competitiveness dimensions for different types of tourism. For instance, Lee and King (2006) emphasizes destination resources, destination strategies, and the environment as key ingredients for Taiwan's hot springs tourism. Furthermore, Chi et al. (2020) discovered that infrastructure, hospitality, educational opportunities, and the rural environment significantly influence behavioral intentions in rural tourism within China.

Third, although perceived destination competitiveness has been extensively studied as a factor influencing desirable outcomes, such as the intention to revisit, limited research has explored how individual travel behavior shapes these perceptions (Jeong & Kim, 2019; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003; Zainuddin et al., 2023). Behavioral constructs such as travel companions and frequency of visits are rarely integrated into existing models of destination competitiveness (Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Chen et al., 2016). Furthermore, previous studies often generalize destination competitiveness as a uniform perception among all visitors, overlooking variations between first-time and repeat visitors. As a result, exploring the role of travel behavior can provide insights into how destinations can tailor their competitiveness strategies to different visitor profiles.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Consequently, the aim of this study is to compare competitiveness dimensions and behavioral intentions between those two destinations. The second objective is to explore whether tourists with different travel behavior perceive competitive dimensions differently. Finally, using the results from previously mentioned objectives, the guidelines for enhancing destination competitiveness for both destinations will be developed.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Hypothesis 1: Two agritourism destinations have different levels of competitiveness as perceived by tourists.

Hypothesis 2a: There is a difference in destination competitiveness among tourists possessing different travel behaviors (number of visits).

Hypothesis 2b: There is a difference in destination competitiveness among tourists possessing different travel behaviors (travel companion).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

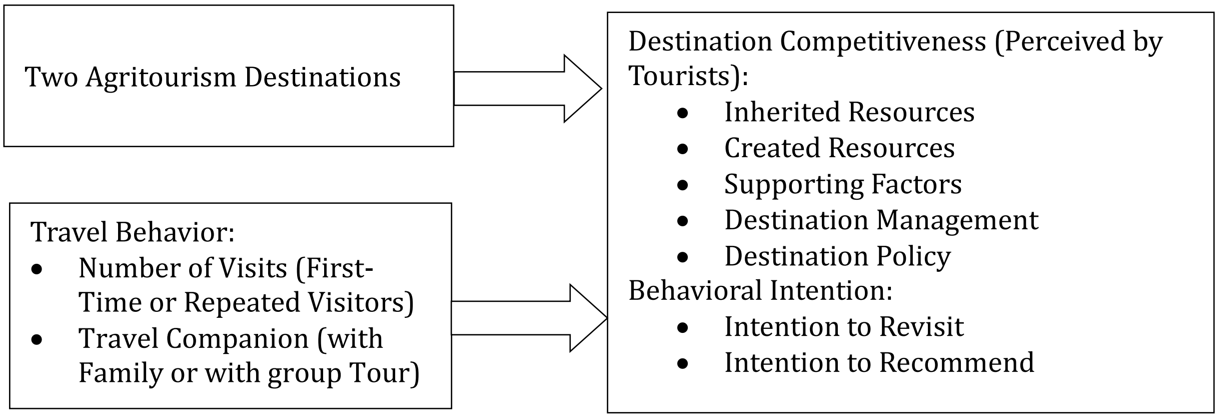


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

LITERATURE REVIEW

Destination Competitiveness

Destination competitiveness has been defined in various, yet complementary ways by tourism researchers (Enright & Newton, 2004; Azzopardi & Nash, 2016; Dupeyras & MacCallum, 2013). Ritchie and Crouch (2003) define it as "the ability to increase tourism expenditure, to increasingly attract visitors while providing them with satisfying, memorable experiences, and to do so in a profitable way, while enhancing the well-being of destination residents and preserving the natural capital of the destination for future generations." Several models seek to evaluate a destination's competitiveness, with Crouch and Ritchie's (1999) framework being one of the most well-known. Crouch and Ritchie (1999) describe core resources as the fundamental attributes that define a destination's attractiveness. These resources are the primary factors that make one location more appealing than others. Dwyer and Kim (2003) further distinguish between inherited (endowed) and created resources. This model is particularly relevant to agritourism as it incorporates both natural resources (farm or garden) and created resources (educational activities).

(1) Inherited Resources: Natural and Cultural Resources

According to Dwyer & Kim (2003, p. 377), the resources category is divided into two types: endowed (inherited) and created. Endowed resources can be classified as natural (mountains, lakes, beaches, rivers, climate etc.) and heritage or cultural (cuisine, handicrafts, language, customs, belief systems etc.). Created resources include tourism infrastructure, special events, the range of available activities, entertainment and shopping.

The endowed (inherited) resources encompass the natural landscape and climate of a destination, which contribute to unforgettable experiences and evoke positive emotions, thereby influencing behavioral intentions (Chang et al., 2019). Another crucial inherited resource is culture and history, these elements help enhance a destination's competitiveness. Destinations which offer a unique environment or lifestyle distinct from everyday life provide a competitive advantage by fostering memorable experiences. Research supports a positive correlation between cultural uniqueness and the competitiveness of rural tourism destinations (Aziz et al., 2011).

Natural Resources in Agritourism, Thailand

Research on agritourism in Thailand highlights the significance of natural beauty and local cultural experiences as major appeals for tourists. Hirankitti et al. (2014) surveyed 1,600 Thai tourists and found that fruit orchards are the most popular agritourism destinations, with tourists particularly appreciating the scenic allure of these sites. Patamaritthakil and Promlang (2024) assessed the potential and development strategies for agritourism in Wang Nam Khiao, Nakhon Ratchasima, utilizing a mixed-method approach. Their findings emphasize that clean, fresh air is a competitive advantage for this destination. Similarly, Sribenjachoti et al. (2018) studied agritourism in

Chantaburi, finding that the province's diverse agricultural resources, particularly high-quality fruit orchards, enhance its appeal to tourists, attracting them to both visit and purchase local produce. Suwankut et al. (2021) explored agritourism management in Rayong and Chantaburi through qualitative research, identifying the richness of local resources as a critical factor. Their study accentuates the importance of resource abundance in supporting sustainable agritourism. Finally, Pojana et al. (2024) investigated tourist behavior at the Bamboo Garden by Yai Lee Agritourism Site, finding that the primary motivation for visiting agritourism locations is the opportunity to connect with nature.

Cultural Resources in Agritourism, Thailand

Research highlights the role of cultural resources in enhancing agritourism experiences across Thailand. Suwankut et al. (2021) studied agritourism management in Rayong and Chantaburi, utilizing in-depth interviews with local leaders and key figures. Their findings emphasize that local culture and indigenous knowledge are critical to the success of agritourism in these areas. Additionally, they recommend promoting agricultural education, preserving local traditions, and encouraging eco-cultural tourism activities, such as mangrove conservation and fishing experiences, to allow visitors to engage in the local way of life.

Similarly, Maraphot and Sombun (2023) explored agritourism route development in Phanom Sarakham, Chachoengsao. Through qualitative research with local farmers and tourism operators, they found that created resources, including hands-on experiences with community agricultural practices, significantly contribute to enriching tourists' cultural and educational experiences. Khunawut and Phinij (2017) investigated the marketing competitiveness of Nakhon Chai Burin tourism using a mixed-method approach, including surveys of 400 Thai tourists and interviews. Their research reveals that the region boasts diverse attractions, highlighted by unique cultural assets such as ancient Khmer heritage, natural sites, and renowned elephant villages. These elements together position Nakhon Chai Burin as a culturally rich and competitive tourism destination.

(2) Created Resources

As tourists nowadays are increasingly seeking active over passive experiences, the variety of activities or events offered has become crucial. These activities span recreational, educational, cultural, and natural experiences, providing tourists with diverse ways to engage with a destination. Outdoor activities, for instance, are essential resources for rural tourism (Buhalis, 2000; Maksimovic et al., 2015). Events and activities are often designed to enhance a destination's image and awareness, allowing tourists to immerse themselves in unique cultural and heritage experiences (Lee et al., 2024). In this study, activities such as "learning to plant fruits" and "exploring the benefits of herbs" are highlighted. The former focuses on enjoyment and hands-on involvement, while the latter combines engagement with learning, aligning with findings by Zhang et al. (2018), who observed that enjoyment, learning, and participation are key competitiveness factors. Similarly, Suhartanto et al. (2020) found that educational experiences significantly impact behavioral intentions, a central element of tourist behavior (Hair et al., 2019; Schmitt, 1999). According to Arizo and Apritado (2022)' study in the province of Cebu, farm activities such as fruit picking, walking in fruit and vegetable gardens, horseback riding, honey tasting, learning how to make wine and cheese, or buying local handicrafts have a direct positive influence on the intention to recommend. Furthermore, Brune et al. (2022) found that experiences created for visitors have a direct positive impact on their intention to revisit agritourism sites.

Created Resources in Agritourism, Thailand

Research on agritourism in Thailand reveals the importance of interactive and educational experiences that enhance tourists' engagement with agricultural practices. Based on a survey of 1,600 Thai tourists, Hirankitti et al. (2014) found that tourists highly value educational aspects of agritourism, indicating a strong interest in learning opportunities during their visits. Suwankut, et al. (2021), conducted a qualitative study in Rayong and Chantaburi, interviewing community leaders and local stakeholders. Their findings suggest promoting agricultural learning, local traditions, and environmental conservation as core activities. In Chachoengsao, Maraphot and Sombun (2023) argued that created resources, such as opportunities to engage with traditional agricultural practices (e.g., like rice planting) significantly enrich tourists' experiences by immersing them in the rural lifestyle and agricultural culture.

Pojana et al. (2024) investigated tourist behavior in agritourism Site, discovering that the primary motivations for visiting include engaging in nature and learning sustainable farming practices. In Wang Nam Khiao, Nakhon Ratchasima, Patamaritthakil & Promlang (2024) employed a mixed-methods approach, combining interviews with residents and government officials with surveys of 330 tourists. They proposed that agritourism activities focus on experiential learning, such as vegetable planting, harvesting, and cooking local dishes, to foster active tourist participation. Sarnsook (2016) conducted a study in Nakhon Nayok, using in-depth interviews and participatory observation. The research found that seasonal activities and education can enhance tourist awareness of local ecosystems, further enriching the agritourism experience. These activities align with tourists' desire for immersive experiences, enhancing their intention to revisit and recommend, which ultimately contributes to the economic sustainability of the destination.

(3) Supporting Factors

This dimension is crucial to building a successful tourism industry, encompassing transportation infrastructure, amenities, and basic resources such as sanitation, water, and public facilities (Buhalis, 2000; Wilde & Cox, 2008). These elements play a significant role in influencing tourists' choice of destination (Cucculelli & Goffi, 2016). Infrastructure is especially critical in rural tourism, where it is essential for enhancing the visitor experience (Craggs & Schofield, 2011; Nam et al., 2011), which is closely linked to tourists' intentions to return (Bonn et al., 2007). Accessibility also contributes significantly to destination competitiveness, especially in rural areas (Chin et al., 2022), with accessibility and clear signage positively impacting tourists' likelihood to recommend and revisit (Prayag, 2009). Furthermore, local hospitality plays a vital role, as visitors expect to feel welcomed, and the warmth of residents can significantly impact tourists' revisitation intentions. Research shows positive links between resident hospitality and tourists' behavioral intentions (Nazir et al., 2021; Žabkar et al., 2010).

Supporting Factors in Agritourism, Thailand

Several studies highlight the need for enhanced infrastructure and community readiness to support the growth of agritourism in Thailand. According to Boonpim et al. (2020), Chumporn Province has the potential to become an agritourism destination by improving infrastructure such as road upgrades, access to drinking water, and clear signage. Since those infrastructures are necessary to create a comfortable and safe environment for tourists. Patamaritthakil and Promlang (2024) assessed agritourism potential in Wang Nam Khiao, Nakhon Ratchasima, and recommended facility improvements, including upgraded restrooms, pathways, and signage, to enhance convenience and safety for visitors. Similarly, Thonglatong & Samarak (2020) evaluated agritourism sites in Chantaburi Province, noting the need for better infrastructure and facility management to accommodate increased tourist numbers during peak seasons.

Hospitality and community adaptation are also critical. Suwankut et al. (2021), found that the ability of local communities in Rayong and Chantaburi to welcome visitors, significantly influences tourist experiences. Lastly, based on the study by Dawwiangkan & Pinta (2020) on factors influencing tourists' decision-making at ecotourism destinations in Angkhang and Inthanon, the results indicated that facilities and transportation have a direct positive influence on agritourists' decisions.

Nevertheless, Isichaiyakul and Silpa-archa (2015) examined the tourism policies needed to accommodate ASEAN tourists through interviews and focus groups with stakeholders. Their research indicates that agritourism in Thailand is not yet widely popular among international tourists due to inadequate management, limited promotional efforts, and insufficient facilities, such as signage and internet services.

(4) Destination Management

This dimension focuses on managing service quality. According to Keller and Smeral (1997), quality in tourism consists of three key elements: natural quality, material quality, and non-material quality (such as services). Perceived performance plays a major role in shaping customer satisfaction (Churchill & Surprenant, 1982; Patterson, 1993) and has a direct impact on behavioral intention (Baker & Crompton, 2000). Keaveney (1995) found that poor service perception led over half of customers to switch providers. Studies consistently show a strong connection between perceived service quality and behavioral intentions (Castro et al., 2007; Yacob et al., 2021). Wu and Li (2017) demonstrated that interactions with service providers affect BI, while Liu and Lee (2016) found that positive perceptions of service quality and value enhance word-of-mouth (WOM) communication among tourists. Finally, In the study by Ahmed et al. (2021) on customer loyalty in agritourism green hotels, customer service is shown to have a direct positive influence on the intention to recommend.

Destination Management in Agritourism, Thailand

Patamaritthakil and Promlang (2024) conducted a study on agritourism development strategies in Wang Nam Khiao, Nakhon Ratchasima. Their recommendations include enhancing service skills among local staff and residents, ensuring they are well-informed to assist visitors. Iamkijakarn and Khwankitwisala (2018) interviewed local officials and stakeholders involved in agritourism in Rayong, finding that a comprehensive database could improve management efficiency and facilitate rapid, accurate communication with tourists. Their results are consistent with Sribenjachoti et al. (2018)' study on 411 agritourists and tourism operators. They argue that agritourism sites can enhance their service quality by training tourism staffs to provide a welcoming and supportive experience for visitors. Thonglatong and Samarak (2020) assessed agritourism potential in Chantaburi Province, noting a moderate capacity to accommodate tourists due to limitations in management and service quality. They recommend establishing standard service practices and training operators to improve their service knowledge. Dakhathok and Kaewnuch (2017) researched strategies to improve accommodation services in Nakhon Ratchasima through mixed methods, surveying 384 Thai tourists and interviewing hotel managers. They found that tourists desire assurance of quality, cleanliness, and hygiene in accommodations, with high expectations for friendly and reliable service. However, agritourism in Thailand remains less popular among international tourists due to inadequate management as mentioned by Isichaiyakul and Silpa-archa (2015).

(5) Destination Policy

This aspect encompasses various marketing efforts such as product enhancement, pricing tactics, distribution strategies, and service management. These efforts aim to improve essential resources, bolster supportive factors, and respond to existing limitations or emerging opportunities (Ritchie & Crouch, 2010). Important elements shaping tourist behavior include perceived value for money and product quality (Buhalis, 1998). Positive experiences of trip quality and value are shown to increase tourists' likelihood to return and recommend the destination (Chen & Tsai, 2007). Drawing on experience economy theory, Liu and Lee (2016) demonstrated that marketing strategies significantly influence consumers' willingness to make purchases, revisit, and recommend, consistent with Lee and King's (2006) findings on factors that drive destination competitiveness.

Destination Policy in Agritourism, Thailand

Sribenjachoti, et al. (2018) conducted a survey of 411 agritourists along with in-depth interviews with operators and guides. They recommended strategic improvements in four key areas: (1) Product: Enhance the cleanliness and quality of the fruit offered at agritourism sites. (2) Price: Ensure consistent and value-driven pricing for fruit buffets. (3) Place: Improve site accessibility through better signage and travel routes, and (4) Promotion: Use social media to actively communicate information about available fruits and the agritourism sites to attract more visitors.

Isichaiyakul and Silpa-archa (2015) suggested that Thailand needs to further develop its agritourism networking and public relations to make community-based agritourism more recognizable and appealing to tourists. Sarnsook (2016) researched public relations strategies for agritourism in Nakhon Nayok through in-depth interviews and participatory observation with farmers, tourists, and local organization representatives. The study found that the province's promotional efforts were moderate, recommending an increased focus on website promotion, building a strong agritourism image, and organizing seasonal activities. Additionally, it emphasized educating tourists on the ecological impact of agritourism in the area.

In Nan Province, Champathong et al. (2020) used qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews and focus groups with farmers, agritourism operators, local government, and tourism experts. Their findings highlight the value of an integrated marketing communication strategy across various channels. This approach includes creating a central website, utilizing social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), organizing promotional events (such as road shows), partnering with travel agencies (e.g., Agoda, Traveloka), and advertising on YouTube to reach a broader audience.

Behavioral Intention (BI)

Behavioral Intention (BI) refers to the likelihood that an individual will engage in a specific behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Oliver, 2014). While BI may not perfectly predict actual behavior, it is widely regarded as a strong indicator of future actions (Chi et al., 2020). Grounded in the tripartite theory of attitudes-which comprises cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions, BI is often used to assess tourist loyalty, extending beyond mere behavioral loyalty, such as repeat visitation (Ajzen, 2005; Suhartanto et al., 2020). Conative loyalty, or behavioral intention, provides a more comprehensive measure of loyalty, capturing both the intention to revisit and the willingness to recommend (Yang & Peterson, 2004).

Revisit intention, rooted in social exchange theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), represents the likelihood of a tourist returning to a destination (Gohary et al., 2020). Empirical studies support revisit intention as an effective proxy for future behavior (Maxham III, 2001). Similarly, recommendation intention, often referred to as word-of-mouth (WOM), reflects the likelihood of an individual recommending a product or service without commercial incentive (Chang et al., 2018). WOM is a particularly influential tool in tourism marketing due to its high credibility among consumers (Williams & Soutar, 2009). In sum, BI serves as a multidimensional construct, offering insights into both return intentions and advocacy behaviors, thus providing a robust framework for understanding consumer loyalty in tourism contexts.

Travel Behavior and its Influence on Perceived Destination Competitiveness

Travel behavior involves the study of how individuals make decisions regarding travel, including destination choice, travel mode, timing, frequency, and activities undertaken. Travel behavior is hypothesized to influence destination competitiveness and behavioral intention due to its impact on visitors' perception of value and experience quality, as supported by social exchange theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Understanding travel behavior is crucial for developing effective marketing strategies and enhancing destination competitiveness. This study emphasizes two kinds of behavior: one is number of visits, the other is travel companion.

Number of Visits (First-Time and Repeat Visitors)

In this study, the authors categorized the number of visits as first-time or repeated visits. **First-Time Visitor** refers to individuals visiting a destination for the first time. Literature indicates that tourists' perception and satisfaction levels are often influenced by pre-visit information and initial experiences. Managing their experiences effectively is vital for encouraging repeat visitation. **Repeat Visitor** refers to individuals who return to a destination multiple time. Repeat visitation is influenced by prior satisfaction, emotional attachment, and perceived value. Artal-Tur et al. (2019) discusses the "tourist-destination life cycle," highlighting how tourists' behaviors and experiences evolve with repeated visits.

Influence of Number of Visits on Perceived Destination Competitiveness

The number of times a tourist visits a destination significantly shapes their perception due to factors such as familiarity and emotional attachment. These dynamics have an impact on destination competitiveness. In terms of familiarity, repeat visits allow tourists to gain better knowledge of a destination, making them more familiar with its attractions and services. This often leads to more favorable perceptions as the destination becomes less intimidating and more comfortable. Familiarity often leads to a stronger emotional connection, making the destination feel welcoming and trustworthy, key attributes of a competitive destination (Chen & Gursoy, 2001). Repeated visits often foster emotional connections, creating a sense of belonging or nostalgia. This attachment can positively influence perceptions, as tourists begin to associate the destination with personal memories and feelings (Prayag & Ryan, 2012).

Previous studies also discovered the difference between first-time and repeated visitors in evaluating service quality and offerings. Tourists who are more familiar with destinations tend to develop realistic expectations, reducing the likelihood of dissatisfaction due to unmet expectations (Gursoy & McCleary, 2004). As a result of a more balanced perceptions of repeated visitors, the image and perceived competitiveness of a destination can be enhanced (Oppermann, 2000). Revisiting builds a sense of loyalty and attachment to the destination. This emotional connection often translates into advocacy, where tourists actively recommend the destination to others (Prayag & Ryan, 2012). Consequently, it is hypothesized that

H1a: There is a significant difference between first-time or repeated visitors in perceived destination competitiveness and behavioral intention.

Travel Companion

A travel companion refers to any individual who accompanies a traveler during their journey. Travel companions significantly influence travel behavior, destination choice, and the overall satisfaction of a trip (Ekinci et al., 2021). The type of travel companion, whether family, friends, or groups—can shape travelers' preferences, activities, and experiences during their journey (Li & Cai, 2012). The presence of travel companions can enhance tourism experiences and satisfaction. For instance, trips with spouses and friends have been associated with higher revisit intentions and destination satisfaction. The type of travel companions brings unique dynamics to the travel experience, influencing decisions and satisfaction levels (Vada et al., 2022; Su, L., et al., 2021).

Influence of Travel Companions on Tourists' Perception of a Destination

The relationship between destination competitiveness and the influence of travel companions can be explained through **social influence, group behavior dynamics, and emotional contagion theories.** The presence of travel companions significantly shapes a tourist's perception of a destination due to social, emotional, and experiential factors. The dynamics introduced by companions can enhance or detract from the overall travel experience, thus influencing how the destination is perceived (Vada et al., 2022).

Social Influence Theory posits that individuals' behaviors and attitudes are shaped by the people around them. In the context of tourism, travel companions play a critical role in shaping how a destination is perceived and experienced (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). For example, family-friendly destinations offering amenities for children create a perception of competitiveness for family groups. Traveling with friends or group tours may prioritize recreational activities, impacting on how the destination is perceived in terms of excitement and entertainment (Su et al., 2021).

Group Dynamics Theory explains how interactions within a group influence individual behavior and decision-making (Forsyth, 2018). For instance, negative interactions with companions may lead to unfavorable perceptions, even if the destination offers high-quality services (Li & Cai, 2012). In contrast, adventurous companions may push tourists to explore aspects of the destination they wouldn't have experienced alone, leading to enriched and positive perception (Vada et al., 2022). This broadens the overall experience and positively influences the perception of destination competitiveness (Prayag & Ryan, 2012).

According to **Emotional Contagion Theory, e**motional contagion occurs when individuals "catch" emotions from those around them. In tourism, travel companions' positive or negative emotions influence each other's perception of the destination (Hatfield et al., 1994). For example, a shared adventure like rafting or a serene family picnic enhances the overall group sentiment, improving perceptions of the destination's competitiveness. Furthermore, positive experiences shared with companions may increase the likelihood of promoting the destination to others (Prayag & Ryan, 2012). Tourists who experience positive travel dynamics with companions are more likely to recommend the destination to others, boosting its reputation and competitive edge (Su et al., 2021).

As a result, in this study, it is hypothesized that

H2b: Tourists with different types of travel companion (family or group tours) may have different perceptions of destination competitiveness and behavioral intentions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Population and Sampling

The target population are agritourists who visit either Mai Khed Homestay (Mai Khed) or Phumbhubejhr, Herbal and Health Wisdom Learning Park, Bang Decha (Phumbhubejhr). This sample size calculation assumes a 95% confidence level and a 6% margin of error to balance statistical robustness with logistical feasibility. This results in 270 sample size for each destinations. However, to buffer the incomplete questionnaire, the authors collected data from 400 respondents. Of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 310 were fully completed, resulting in a 77.5% response rate, aided by a small incentive. To ensure a representative sample, quota sampling was employed, dividing participants based on income groups. Thai agritourists on-site were invited to participate.

Research Context: This study focuses on two major agritourism sites located in Amphoe Mueang District, Prachinburi Province. One is Phumbhubejhr, which consists of three zones: (1) a 100-year-old wooden house museum, (2) an herb garden organized by medicinal uses, and (3) the largest collection of jars in Thailand and ASEAN. Services include educational activities, accommodation, and a café (https://thai. tourismthailand.org/ Attraction/). The key attractors of Phumbhubejhr are historical building and herbal education, aligning with inherited resources and created resources, destination management. These features are hypothesized to significantly influence tourists' perception of destination competitiveness.

The other agritourism site is Mai Khed Farmstay, which is situated on a 20-rai (7.9-acre) durian farm. The property features a spacious country house, along with a lodge and homestay accommodations. The farm provides well-organized rows of longkongs, rambutans, mangosteens, kratons, and durian. The Durian & Fruit Buffet allows visitors to enjoy unlimited access to freshly harvested rambutans, mangosteens, and longkongs. Overnight guests at Mai Khed Farmstay also have the option to order a special dinner crafted from orchard produce, featuring dishes like Yam Mangosteen Salad, a spicy Durian Red Curry with coconut milk, served alongside Khanom Jeen (thin rice noodles) and vegetables https://www.yearofthedurian.com/ 2022/ 05/mai-khed-prachinburi-durian-farmstay. The key attractors of Mai Khed Farmstay are "durian farm and other fruits" and "Durian and Fruit Buffet" aligning with inherited resources and created resources as well as destination policy. These features are hypothesized to significantly influence tourists' perception of destination competitiveness. Since the unique features of these two sites are different from each other: one is cultural (historical building), the other is natural (farm and fruits). The author aims to explore whether these two sites have significant difference in perceived destination competitiveness.

Research Instrument

The research instrument was a questionnaire consisting of three parts: (1) travel behavior of the respondents, (2) destination competitiveness as perceived by tourists and their intention to revisit and recommend, (3) demographic questions. With regards to destination competitiveness, this study utilized the model by Ritchie and Crouch (2010) and Dwyer and Kim (2003), adapted to agritourism. The key factors include core resources (inherited or created), supporting factors, destination management as well as destination policy. (1) Inherited resources refer to natural assets like landscapes or cultural heritage. (2) Created resources include activities offering recreational, educational, and natural experiences. (3) Supporting factors cover tourism infrastructure, accessibility, and local hospitality (Buhalis, 2000; Wilde & Cox, 2008). (4) Destination management involves quality of service management. (5) Destination Policy deals with marketing strategy. Participants rated 24 items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), with items adapted from Wang and Hsu (2010) and Chi & Qu (2008).

Behavioral Intentions (BI). BI was measured through two constructs: intention to revisit (3 items) and intention to recommend (4 items) (Castro et al., 2007; Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Participants rated each item from 1 (would not) to 5 (definitely would), based on scales from Zeithaml et al. (1996) and Dagger et al. (2011). Composite reliability and average variance extracted were investigated for validity and reliability as reported in Table 2. To ensure content validity, three university research professors reviewed the measurement scales, and adjustments were made to fit the destination's context. The questionnaire was pre-tested on a sample of 40 respondents. Preliminary analysis using Cronbach's alpha (0.50 or higher; Zaichkowsky, 1985) confirmed the reliability of the constructs as reported in Table 2.

Data Analysis

Statistics employed include one sample test and independent sample t-tests.

Human research ethics

This research has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee from Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi RMUTT_REC.

RESEARCH RESULTS

At Phumbhubejhr, most of respondents are female (64.52%), two-thirds (75.81 %) are 26-58 years old. About 60% of them have a bachelor's degree. Most of them are employees in the government/state enterprise or private business. Their income is equally split at different levels. Nearly half of them (42.90%) are from the Northeastern region. Most of them are first time visitors (62.90) and travel with family or friends (65.48%).

As for Mai Khed Homestay, most respondents were male (70.32%) percent, nearly two-thirds (65.48 %) are 26-58 years old. Most of them (84.52%) have a college degree or lower. They are employees (42.58%) and business owner (26.45). Their income is equally split at different levels. Nearly half of them (58.07%) are from the central and eastern region. Most of them are first time visitors (76.77%) and travel with family or friends (85.81%). The details are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondent’s Profile and Travel Behavior

Demographic	Phumbhubejhr		Maikhed	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Gender				
1. Male	110	35.48	218	70.32
2. Female	200	64.52	92	29.68
Age				
1. Less than 26 yrs old	32	10.32	76	24.52
2. 26-43 yrs old	117	37.74	97	31.29
3. 44-58 yrs old	118	38.07	106	34.19
4. 59-77 yrs old	43	13.87	31	10.00
Educational Level				
Less than bachelor’s degree	55	17.74	88	28.39
Having bachelor’s degree	185	59.68	174	56.13
Higher than bachelor’s degree	70	22.58	48	15.48
Occupation				
Employee	229	73.87	132	42.58
Students	32	10.32	77	24.84
Business owner	25	8.07	82	26.45
Retired / Others	24	7.74	19	6.13

Table 2. (Cont.)

Demographic	Phumbhubejhr		Maikhed	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Average Income/Month				
Less than 20,000 Bht	85	27.42	53	17.10
20,001 - 35,000 Bht	91	29.36	49	15.81
35,001 - 50,000 Bht	51	16.45	55	17.74
50,001 - 65,000 Bht	67	21.61	44	14.19
65,001 Bht or higher	16	4.84+.32	109	22.58+12.58
Residential Areas				
1. North	18	5.81	44	14.19
2. Northeast	133	42.90	53	17.10
3. West	11	3.55	20	6.45
4. Central	67	21.61	103	33.23
5. East	77	24.84	77	24.84
6. South	4	1.29	13	4.19
Tourist's Behavior				
First	195	62.90	238	76.77
Repeated	115	37.10	72	23.23
Travel companion				
With group tour	107	34.52	44	14.19
With friends/family	203	65.48	266	85.81

Destination Competitiveness as Perceived by Tourists and Their Behavioral Intentions.
The criteria for interpreting the mean scores are as follows: a score of 4.21-5.00 indicates 'strongly agree,' a score of 3.41-4.20 indicates 'agree,' a score of 2.61-3.40 indicates 'neither agree nor disagree,' a score of 1.81-2.60 indicates 'disagree,' and a score of 1.00-1.80 indicates 'strongly disagree.' Table 3 shows that both destinations have competitiveness at the 'strongly agree' level."

Table 3. Destination Competitiveness of Mai Khed and Phumbhubejhr and Behavioral Intentions of Tourists

	Maikhed		Phumbhubejhr	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Inherited Resources (Composite score)	4.359	0.519	44.53	0.507
B1.1 The herb garden is plentiful.	4.339	0.622	4.419	0.637
B1.2 The destination possesses unique characteristics (B1.2)	4.345	0.683	4.581	0.562
B1.3 The local lifestyle is intriguing.	4.361	0.652	4.526	0.595
B1.4 The natural scenery is stunning (B1.4).	4.426	0.653	4.565	0.564
Cronbach alpha =	.780		.873	
Created Resources (Composite score) (CR = .90, AVE = .76)	4.312	0.533	44.22	0.482
B2.1 The destination is famous.	4.245	0.727	4.452	0.630
B2.2 The destination provides a variety of products or services.	4.303	0.691	4.329	0.614
B2.3 Suitable tourism activities are provided.	4.316	0.690	4.406	0.565
B2.4 The destination provides a memorable and impressive experience.	4.384	0.632	4.494	0.550
Cronbach alpha =	.781		.833	
Supporting Factors (Composite score) (CR = .90, AVE = .76)	4.301	0.520	44.30	0.501
B3.1 Gas stations/restrooms are clean.	4.168	0.713	4.342	0.607
B3.2 The souvenir shop offers a diverse range of products.	4.213	0.742	4.381	0.589
B3.3 The restaurant is appetizing and of high standard.	4.326	0.733	4.319	0.616
B3.4 Travel access is convenient.	4.361	0.709	4.465	0.572
B3.5 The pathway to the attraction is safe.	4.316	0.651	4.503	0.544
B3.6 There is clear signage.	4.303	0.723	4.416	0.589
B3.7 The local people are friendly and polite.	4.419	0.677	4.568	0.546
Cronbach alpha =	.858		.888	

Table 3. (Cont).

	Maikhed		Phumbhubejhr	
	Mean	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**
Destination Management (Composite score) (CR = .90, AVE = .76)	4.358	0.518	44.61	0.452
B4.1 The staff is knowledgeable.	4.290	0.638	4.558	0.547
B4.2 It is possible to make reservations via telephone or online.	4.332	0.675	4.535	0.561
B4.3 The staff is helpful.	4.390	0.638	4.655	0.503
B4.4 Interesting educational workshops (herbs usage).	4.419	0.627	4.635	0.508
Cronbach alpha =	.816		.869	
Destination Policy (Composite score) (CR = .90, AVE = .76)	4.361	0.514	44.51	0.473
B5.1 Presenting information about tourist attractions.	4.277	0.659	4.487	0.590
B5.2 Sales promotion is available.	4.310	0.674	4.452	0.582
B5.3 Free site visits/product tastings are available.	4.394	0.649	4.513	0.573
B5.4 Value-adding in processed herbs/fruits.	4.426	0.668	4.587	0.519
B5.5 Accommodation is of high quality.	4.397	0.678	4.545	0.542
Cronbach alpha =	.830		.888	
Intention to revisit (CR = .85, AVE = .74)	4.314	0.578	44.39	0.578
C1.1 I will revisit this place.	4.313	0.650	4.448	0.565
C1.2 The likelihood of my return in the future is high.	4.371	0.664	4.448	0.588
C1.3 In the near future, I will return to this place.	4.248	0.733	4.261	0.668
Cronbach alpha =	.873		.817	
Intention to recommend. (CR = .90, AVE = .76)	4.362	0.537	44.43	0.537
C2.1 I would recommend this place to my family.	4.390	0.653	4.419	0.567
C2.2 I would recommend this place to my friends/acquaintances.	4.287	0.617	4.497	0.544
C2.3 I will say good things about my visit to this destination.	4.352	0.630	4.332	0.684
C2.4 I would encourage friends and relatives to visit this place.	4.419	0.622	4.439	0.558
Cronbach alpha =	.799		.871	

Mai Khed has the highest mean value for destination policy, followed by destination management and created resources respectively. Phumbhubejhr has the highest mean value for destination management, followed by inherited resources and destination policy respectively.

The following graphs depict the mean scores for each dimension of competitiveness. Figure 2 represents destination competitiveness for Mai Khed destination while Figure 3 represents destination competitiveness for Phumbhubejhr.

Figure 2. Dimensions of Destination Competitiveness Arranged in Order of the Mean Value (Mai Khed)

Figure 3. Dimensions of Destination Competitiveness Arranged in Order of the Mean Value (Phumbhubejhr)

The high score in destination policy for Mai Khed reflects effective promotional strategies, while the lower score in supporting factors indicates areas needing improvement, such as infrastructure. The high score in destination management for Phumbhubejhr indicates effective management of service quality whereas the lower score in created resources suggests that Phumbhubejhr should improve its tourism activities and tourism products/services.

Objective 1: To compare destination competitiveness and behavioral intention between both agritourism destinations (Mai Khed and Phumbhubejhr).

Using independent samples t-tests, the results indicated that both destinations have different levels of competitiveness at 95% significant level. However, they are not different in terms of behavioral intentions. It should be noted that the mean values of Phumbhubejhr's competitiveness dimensions are significantly higher than the mean values of Mai Khed as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Independent Sample t-tests of Competitiveness and Behavioral Intentions between Mai Khed and Phumbhubejhr

Group Statistics						**Equality of Variances**		**t-tests for Equality of means**		
Destination		**N**	**Mean**	**SD**		**F**	**Sig.**	**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2tailed)**
Inherited Resources	Mai Khed	310	4.3589	0.51948	Equal variances assumed	0.000	0.996	-4.030	618	0.000
	Phumbhubejhr	**310**	**4.5250**	**0.50681**	Equal variances not assumed			-4.030	617.623	0.000
Created Resources	Mai Khed	310	4.3121	0.53287	Equal variances assumed	1.038	0.309	-2.648	618	0.008
	Phumbhubejhr	**310**	**4.4202**	**0.48216**	Equal variances not assumed			-2.648	611.921	0.008
Supporting Factors	Mai Khed	310	4.3009	0.51958	Equal variances assumed	1.700	0.193	-3.206	618	0.001
	Phumbhubejhr	**310**	**4.4263**	**0.45167**	Equal variances not assumed			-3.206	606.262	0.001
Destination Management	Mai Khed	310	4.3581	0.51751	Equal variances assumed	0.920	0.338	-6.386	618	0.000
	Phumbhubejhr	**310**	**4.6073**	**0.45197**	Equal variances not assumed			-6.386	607.004	0.000
Destination Policy	Mai Khed	310	4.3606	0.51376	Equal variances assumed	0.351	0.554	-3.870	618	0.000
	Phumbhubejhr	**310**	**4.5142**	**0.47322**	Equal variances not assumed			-3.870	613.872	0.000

Table 4. (Cont.)

Group Statistics						Equality of Variances		t-tests for Equality of means		
Destination		N	Mean	SD		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2tailed)
Intention to Revisit	Mai Khed	310	4.3140	0.57796	Equal variances assumed	0.306	0.580	-1.631	618	0.103
	Phumbhubejhr	310	4.3860	0.52044	Equal variances not assumed			-1.631	611.331	0.103
Intention to Recommend	Mai Khed	310	4.3621	0.53681	Equal variances assumed	3.026	0.082	-1.610	618	0.108
	Phumbhubejhr	310	4.4306	0.52296	Equal variances not assumed			-1.610	617.579	0.108

Objective 3: To determine whether differences in travel behavior resulting in differences in perceived destination competitiveness and behavioral intentions.

Travel behavior: First Time or Repeat Visitors

Using independent samples t-tests, the results indicated that repeated visitors perceived Mai Khed higher than first time visitors in terms of inherited resources and destination management. In contrast, first-time visitors perceived Phumbhubejhr higher than repeated visitors in terms of created resources, supporting factors and intention to recommend as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Independent Sample t-tests of Competitiveness and Behavioral Intentions between First Time Visitors and Repeated Visitors. Mai Khed and Phumbhubejhr

Group Statistics						Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-tests for Equality of Means		
Mai Khed		N	Mean	SD		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.
Inherited Resources	First Time Visitors	283	4.345	0.516	Equal variances assumed	0.680	0.410	**-2.012**	**299**	**0.045**
	Repeat Visitors	**18**	**4.597**	**0.523**	Equal variances not assumed			-1.991	19.172	0.061
Created Resources	First Time Visitors	283	4.311	0.518	Equal variances assumed	1.424	0.234	0.365	299	0.715
	Repeat Visitors	18	4.264	0.699	Equal variances not assumed			0.281	18.208	0.782
Supporting Factors	First Time Visitors	283	4.292	0.520	Equal variances assumed	0.049	0.826	-0.959	299	0.339
	Repeat Visitors	18	4.413	0.509	Equal variances not assumed			-0.976	19.323	0.341
Destination Management	First Time Visitors	283	4.340	0.518	Equal variances assumed	0.858	0.355	**-2.171**	**299**	**0.031**
	Repeat Visitors	**18**	**4.611**	**0.439**	Equal variances not assumed			-2.510	20.129	0.021
Destination Policy	First Time Visitors	283	4.348	0.499	Equal variances assumed	0.893	0.345	-1.509	299	0.132
	Repeat Visitors	18	4.533	0.590	Equal variances not assumed			-1.300	18.576	0.209
Intention to Revisit	First Time Visitors	283	4.304	0.567	Equal variances assumed	2.815	0.094	-0.210	299	0.834
	Repeat Visitors	18	4.333	0.723	Equal variances not assumed			-0.169	18.355	0.867
Intention to Recommend	First Time Visitors	283	4.351	0.542	Equal variances assumed	1.507	0.221	-1.147	299	0.252
	Repeat Visitors	18	4.500	0.411	Equal variances not assumed			-1.462	20.950	0.159
Phumbhubejhr										
Inherited Resources	First Time Visitors	166	4.529	0.506	Equal variances assumed	2.117	0.147	1.597	239	0.112
	Repeat Visitors	75	4.413	0.546	Equal variances not assumed			1.552	133.626	0.123
Created Resources	First Time Visitors	**166**	**4.446**	**0.504**	Equal variances assumed	0.575	0.449	**2.015**	**239**	**0.045**
	Repeat Visitors	75	4.307	0.479	Equal variances not assumed			2.055	149.830	0.042

Table 5. (Cont.)

Group Statistics						Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-tests for Equality of Means		
Mai Khed		**N**	**Mean**	**SD**		**F**	**Sig.**	**t**	**df**	**Sig.**
Supporting Factors	First Time Visitors	**166**	**4.460**	**0.493**	Equal variances assumed	12.000	0.001	2.353	239	0.019
	Repeat Visitors	75	4.309	0.379	Equal variances not assumed			**2.595**	**182.481**	**0.010**
Destination Management	First Time Visitors	166	4.559	0.473	Equal variances assumed	0.182	0.670	0.134	239	0.894
	Repeat Visitors	75	4.550	0.461	Equal variances not assumed			0.135	146.328	0.893
Destination Policy	First Time Visitors	166	4.469	0.500	Equal variances assumed	2.862	0.092	0.386	239	0.700
	Repeat Visitors	75	4.443	0.448	Equal variances not assumed			0.403	158.262	0.688
Intention to Revisit	First Time Visitors	166	4.396	0.579	Equal variances assumed	9.089	0.003	1.377	239	0.170
	Repeat Visitors	75	4.293	0.417	Equal variances not assumed			1.552	193.108	0.122
Intention to Recommend	First Time Visitors	**166**	**4.461**	**0.548**	Equal variances assumed	6.213	0.013	1.924	239	0.056
	Repeat Visitors	75	4.320	0.473	Equal variances not assumed			**2.033**	**163.974**	**0.044**

Travel Behavior: Travel with Group Tour or Travel with Friends/family

To determine whether these two groups of tourists have different perceptions and behavioral intentions, independent samples t-tests were conducted. The results indicated that tourists traveling with family or friends perceived the Mai Khed destination as more competitive across all dimensions. Additionally, their behavioral intentions were significantly higher than those of tourists in group tours.

For Phumbhubejhr, the results follow a similar pattern to Mai Khed. Specifically, tourists with family or friends had higher perceptions of competitiveness and stronger behavioral intentions than those in group tours, except in the dimension of created resources, as shown in Table 6."

Table 6 Independent Sample t-tests of Competitiveness and Behavioral Intentions between Tourists Travelling with Group Tour or Travelling with Friends/family.

		Descriptive Statistics				Levene's test for Equality of Variances		t-tests for equality of Means		
Mai Khed	**Travel Behavior**	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**		**F**	**Sig.**	**t**	**df**	**Sig.**
Inherited Resources	With Group Tour	44	4.159	0.622		4.505	0.035	-2.784	308	0.006
	With Family/Friend	**266**	**4.392**	**0.494**				-2.363	52.354	0.022
Created Resources	With Group Tour	44	4.080	0.635		3.858	0.050	-3.171	308	0.002
	With Family/Friend	**266**	**4.351**	**0.505**				-2.693	52.376	0.009
Supporting Factors	With Group Tour	44	4.042	0.588		5.376	0.021	-3.635	308	0.000
	With Family/Friend	**266**	**4.344**	**0.496**				-3.216	53.572	0.002
Destination Management	With Group Tour	44	4.148	0.645		9.514	0.002	-2.946	308	0.003
	With Family/Friend	**266**	**4.393**	**0.486**				-2.409	51.367	0.020
Destination Policy	With Group Tour	44	4.064	0.617		8.411	0.004	-4.253	308	0.000
	With Family/Friend	**266**	**4.410**	**0.478**				-3.548	51.888	0.001
Intention to Revisit	With Group Tour	44	3.962	0.679		2.991	0.085	-4.493	308	0.000
	With Family/Friend	**266**	**4.372**	**0.539**				-3.812	52.345	0.000
Intention to Recommend	With Group Tour	44	4.080	0.662		5.418	0.021	-3.853	308	0.000
	With Family/Friend	**266**	**4.409**	**0.499**				-3.154	51.403	0.003
Phumbhubejhr		**N**	**Mean**	**SD**		**F**	**Sig.**	**t**	**df**	**Sig.**
Inherited Resources	With Group Tour	107	4.376	0.575	Equal variances assumed	11.665	0.001	-3.836	308	0.000
	With Family/Friend	**203**	**4.603**	**0.449**	Equal variances not assumed			**-3.557**	**175.534**	**0.000**
Created Resources	With Group Tour	107	4.350	0.494	Equal variances assumed	0.191	0.663	-1.855	308	0.065
	With Family/Friend	203	4.457	0.473	Equal variances not assumed			-1.830	207.762	0.069

Table 6 (Cont.)

		Descriptive Statistics				Levene's test for Equality of Variances		t-tests for equality of Means		
Phumbhubejhr		**N**	**Mean**	**SD**		**F**	**Sig.**	**t**	**df**	**Sig.**
Supporting Factors	With Group Tour	107	4.355	0.476	Equal variances assumed	0.498	0.481	**-2.023**	**308**	**0.044**
	With Family/Friend	**203**	**4.464**	**0.435**	Equal variances not assumed			-1.967	199.520	0.051
Destination Management	With Group Tour	107	4.460	0.492	Equal variances assumed	7.125	0.008	-4.271	308	0.000
	With Family/Friend	**203**	**4.685**	**0.410**	Equal variances not assumed			**-4.039**	**184.834**	**0.000**
Destination Policy	With Group Tour	107	4.391	0.472	Equal variances assumed	1.287	0.257	**-3.393**	**308**	**0.001**
	With Family/Friend	**203**	**4.579**	**0.462**	Equal variances not assumed			-3.370	211.602	0.001
Intention to Revisit	With Group Tour	107	4.246	0.571	Equal variances assumed	0.736	0.392	**-3.498**	**308**	**0.001**
	With Family/Friend	**203**	**4.460**	**0.477**	Equal variances not assumed			-3.311	185.291	0.001
Intention to Recommend	With Group Tour	107	4.348	0.546	Equal variances assumed	0.079	0.779	**-2.027**	**308**	**0.044**
	With Family/Friend	**203**	**4.474**	**0.506**	Equal variances not assumed			-1.980	202.127	0.049

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

For Mai Khed, the highest score in destination policy reflects effective marketing strategies enhancing its appeal and visitor satisfaction. That is how they value-added their products (Mean = 4.42) (fresh local produce), how they organize fruit picking activities (Mean = 4.39) as well as how they provide sales promotion (Mean = 4.31). As argued by Xu and Au (2023), competitive destinations attract and satisfy tourists by leveraging unique resources and effective policies. This result also resonates with the findings from Patamaritthakil and Promlang (2024) in Wang Nam Khiao, where strategic promotions were found to contribute positively to tourist satisfaction. With regards to supporting factors, even though its mean value was significantly above 4.21, it was lowest among five dimensions. As a result, there is still room for improving tourism facilities such as restrooms, souvenir shops, restaurants and travel access.

Phumbhubejhr's top score in destination management highlights the efficient operations management in elevating its attractiveness and retaining visitors. That is, their staff are knowledgeable (Mean = 4.32) and helpful (Mean =- 4.39). This is consistent with Chen & Tsai (2007), who show that destination can promote repeat visits by ensuring quality service. Meanwhile, the highest score of inherited resources aligns with Enright & Newton (2004) and Aziz et al. (2011), who argue that destinations with strong cultural and environmental offerings create memorable experiences that boost tourist loyalty. Phumbhubejhr's strength in inherited resources such as natural landscapes and historical building highlights how destinations can enhance their competitiveness through unique agricultural and cultural offerings. However, the mean value of created resources was lowest. Consequently, there is still room for creating memorable and immersive experience (Mean = 4.38) by providing suitable tourism activities.

While both destinations scored highly in all competitiveness dimensions, Phumbhubejhr excelled in 'Destination Management,' likely due to its focus on educational workshops and knowledgeable staff. Conversely, Mai Khed's strength in 'Destination Policy' reflects its successful marketing strategies, such as the Durian & Fruit Buffet and exclusive accommodations.

Based on the results from the first objective, which is a comparison of competitiveness and behavioral intention between these two destinations.

Phumbhubejhr consistently has higher mean scores than Mai Khed across all five dimensions, with p-values less than 0.05. Regarding the first dimension (Inherited Resources), Phumbhubejhr's mean score is significantly higher than Mai Khed's. This suggests that Phumbhubejhr may be more effectively leveraging natural or cultural resources to enhance its competitiveness. With regards to the second dimension, Phumbhubejhr also outperforms Mai Khed in created resources. This indicates Phumbhubejhr's advantage in developing tourism-related attractions. The third dimensions (Supporting Factors), Phumbhubejhr has a stronger infrastructure and support system that enhances the overall visitor experience. The fourth dimension (Destination Management), Phumbhubejhr's mean is notably higher than Mai Khed's, reflecting effective management practices that contribute positively to its competitive standing. The fifth dimension (Destination Policy), the mean score for Phumbhubejhr surpasses Mai Khed's, suggesting that Phumbhubejhr's policy framework might better support tourism growth and visitor satisfaction. These consistent results indicate that the differences are unlikely to be due to random chances.

Behavioral Intention Comparison: Despite the differences in competitiveness, the two destinations do not differ significantly in terms of behavioral intentions. It can be implied that factors beyond competitiveness, perhaps related to visitor expectations or satisfaction, might play a role in shaping behavioral intentions for these agritourism destinations.

With regards to the second objective, the results indicate a significant difference in perceived destination competitiveness and behavioral intentions among tourists with different travel behaviors.

Comparison Between First-Time and Repeat Visitors

For Mai Khed, repeat visitors rated these two dimensions (Inherited Resources and Destination Management) significantly higher than first-time visitors, suggesting that familiarity with Mai Khed may enhance their appreciation of the location's natural resources and management practices. These repeat visitors likely have established positive experiences and trust in the quality and consistency of the destination's offerings. This finding aligns with prior research indicating that familiarity and positive past experiences contribute to enhanced perceptions of a destination's attributes (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). Managers at Mai Khed can leverage this insight by creating loyalty programs or repeat-visitor incentives to strengthen and reward this positive relationship. However, there are no statistically significant differences in behavioral intentions between first-time and repeat visitors. This suggests that both groups have similar likelihoods to revisit or recommend Mai Khed, regardless of prior experience.

For Phumbhubejhr, first-time visitors rated these two dimensions (Created Resources and Supporting Factors) significantly higher than repeat visitors. This suggests that Phumbhubejhr's unique offerings and infrastructure make a strong initial impression, which aligns with studies indicating that new visitors are often more attentive to tangible attributes such as amenities and activities (Enright & Newton, 2004). This highlights Phumbhubejhr's effectiveness in attracting first-time visitors through well-developed infrastructure and unique attractions. Managers at Phumbhubejhr might consider maintaining this initial appeal by continuing to innovate and refresh their offerings, keeping them engaging and novel for new audiences. In terms of behavioral intention, first-time visitors also rated their intention to recommend Phumbhubejhr higher than repeat visitors. This may indicate that Phumbhubejhr's unique appeal resonates particularly well with new visitors, leading them to actively promote it to others.

Comparison Between Tour Travelers and Family/Friend Travelers

Across all 'competitiveness' dimensions, travelers with family or friends rated Mai Khed significantly higher than those traveling with a group tour. This pattern is the same as Phumbhubejhr's. suggesting that the social aspect of traveling may enhance perceptions of the destination's appeal and competitiveness. Traveling with family or friends often fosters a sense of comfort and enjoyment, allowing visitors to connect more deeply with their surroundings (Prayag, 2009). In contrast, group tour travelers might feel more constrained by structured schedules, which may limit personal engagement with the destination. Both Mai Khed and Phumbhubejhr could capitalize on this insight by tailoring experiences to family and friend groups, such as offering customizable itineraries or private group activities that allow for more meaningful and personalized experiences.

Furthermore, family/friend travelers also have a significantly higher behavioral intention compared to group tour travelers. This implies that personal connections may positively influence visitors' engagement and satisfaction, contributing to a greater likelihood of repeat visits and recommendations. This aligns with social exchange theory, which suggests that shared positive experiences among family or friends increase satisfaction and the desire to repeat the experience (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). This suggests that agritourism destinations like Mai Khed and Phumbhubejhr should emphasize group-friendly amenities and activities that encourage shared experiences. Additionally, promotional efforts that target families and friend groups through personalized offers, such as family packages or group discounts, could effectively boost repeat visitation and word-of-mouth referrals.

In summary, these results underscore the importance of travel behavior in shaping visitor perceptions and intentions. Repeat visitors and those traveling with family or friends exhibit stronger connections with the destination, driven by positive associations with specific destination attributes. These insights provide a foundation for tailoring management strategies for different groups of tourists to foster loyalty, and encourage positive recommendations for both Mai Khed and Phumbhubejhr.

Managerial Implications

Based on the results from the first objective, the following are managerial recommendations for Mai Khed and Phumbhubejhr to strengthen their competitiveness:

For Phumbhubejhr to sustain competitive advantages, management should highlight its unique resources. Phumbhubejhr's herbs garden and historical building (a 100-year-old wooden house museum) should be promoted to attract culturally motivated or health-conscious tourists. Secondly, given the high score in destination management, regular staff training and quality control processes should be continued to ensure consistently positive visitors' experiences. Phumbhubejhr can further explore feedback systems to maintain service quality and adapt to evolving visitor preferences.

With lower scores in competitiveness dimensions, Mai Khed should concentrate on enhancing specific aspects to match Phumbhubejhr's competitive standing. This can be achieved by investing in created and supporting factors such as upgrading facilities, improving visitor amenities (e.g., restrooms, pathways, signage), and expanding recreational offerings can elevate the destination's attractiveness. These improvements will make the site more convenient and enjoyable.

Based on the results from the second objective, both destinations should encourage repeat visits for different visitor groups.

The strategies for repeat tourists are as follows. Loyalty programs should be implemented for repeat visitors. Since repeat visitors at Mai Khed show a stronger appreciation for inherited resources and destination management, managers should create loyalty programs to encourage return visits. This could include discounts, exclusive experiences, or special events only for repeat visitors. A "frequent visitor" program could also build a sense of community and belonging, fostering deeper connections with the destination.

The strategies for first-time tourists are as follows: An initial appeal for first-time visitors should be highlighted. Phumbhubejhr's strong impression on first-time visitors, particularly with created resources and infrastructure, should be leveraged in marketing campaigns. Phumbhubejhr's well-maintained facilities, and diverse activities should be highlighted in advertisements targeting new audiences. Managers can also develop seasonal offerings and limited-time attractions to maintain the novelty and attractiveness of Phumbhubejhr, catering to the interests of first-time visitors.

For traveling with family/friend visitors, Mai Khed and Phumbhubejhr could offer private tours, self-guided trails, or family-focused events that allow these groups to explore at their own pace. Management may consider creating family-friendly packages that include bundled activities, meals, and accommodation discounts for groups, along with interactive activities (e.g., cooking classes, hands-on farming experiences) that family or friend groups can enjoy together.

Given that family/friend travel possessing higher perceptions and behavioral intentions, marketing campaigns should highlight the social aspect of the destinations. Use imagery and storytelling to depict groups, families, and friends enjoying activities together to reinforce the idea of a socially enriching experience. Encourage user-generated content on social media by promoting hashtags or creating incentives for visitors to share their experiences online. This strategy can strengthen the destination's appeal and reach new audiences through word-of-mouth marketing.

For group tour visitors, both destinations should offer a degree of flexibility in itineraries. For instance, allow for optional add-ons where group members can split off for personalized activities or experiences that cater to individual interests.

By implementing these strategies, Mai Khed and Phumbhubejhr can strengthen their competitiveness across diverse visitor groups, ultimately promoting sustainable growth in agritourism

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study is a cross-sectional study that collected data during a specific time of the year, between March and May. Future research could consider collecting data each month, as there may be differences in perceived competitiveness. Additionally, future research could involve benchmarking with highly successful agritourism destinations to evaluate comparative strengths and weaknesses."

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest found in this research.

REFERENCES

Ahmed, F., Mohammed, A., & Abdulwase, R. (2021). The influence of social media engagement on positive e-wom and customer loyalty in agritourism green hotels. *American Based Research Journal, 10*(2), 2304-7151. http://dx.doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4576950

Ajzen, I. (2005). *Attitudes, personality, and behavior* (2nd ed.). Open University Press.

Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (1980). *Understanding attitudes and predicting social behavior.* Prentice-Hall.

All Points East. (n.d.). *Prachinburi province: Thailand off the beaten path*. https://allpointseast.com/blog/thailand/prachinburi-province/

Andrades, L., & Dimanche, F. (2017). Destination competitiveness in Russia: Tourism perceptions and challenges. *Tourism Management, 62*, 152-163. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2017.03.014

Arizo, L. E., & Apritado, J. M. M. (2022). Farm activities and behavioral intention to recommend agritourism sites in Cebu. *Journal of Agritourism Studies, 4*(1), 45-56.

Artal-Tur, A., Correia, A., Serra, J., & Osorio-Caballero, M. I. (2019). Destination choice, repeating behaviour and the tourist-destination life cycle hypothesis. In *Trends in Tourist Behavior* (pp. 175–193). Springer.

Aziz, N. Z., Ariffin, A. Z. M., Omar, N. A., & Yoon S. K. (2011). An investigation of international and domestic tourists' satisfaction in heritage context: Implications for destination marketing. *Jurnal Pengurusan, 33*, 61-76. https://doi.org/10.17576/pengurusan-2011-33-05

Azzopardi, E., & Nash, R. (2016). A framework for island destination competitiveness-Perspectives from the Mediterranean. *Tourism Management, 55*, 215-227. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2015.12.009

Baker, D. A., & Crompton, J. L. (2000). Quality, satisfaction and behavioral intentions. *Annals of Tourism Research, 27*(3), 785-804. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(99)00108-5

Barbieri, C. (2013). Agritourism sustainability. In R. Butler & S. Prideaux (Eds.), *Tourism and resilience* (pp. 121-137). Routledge.

Bonn, M. A., Joseph, S. M., & Dai, M. (2007). International versus domestic visitors: An examination of destination image perceptions. *Journal of Travel Research, 45*(2), 160-170. https://doi.org/ 10.1177/ 0047287506291609

Boonpim, W., Thonglatong, P., & Samarak, P. (2020). Infrastructure and community readiness for agritourism growth in Chumporn Province. *Journal of Thai Rural Tourism Development, 3*(2), 75-88.

Brune, S., Knollenberg, W., Stevenson, K., & Barbieri, C. (2022). Creating visitor experiences: Impact on agritourism revisit intention. *Journal of Agricultural Tourism, 5*(1), 19-34.

Buhalis, D. (1998). Strategic use of information technologies in the tourism industry. *Tourism Management, 19*(5), 409-421.

Buhalis, D. (2000). Marketing the competitive destination of the future. *Tourism Management, 21*(1), 97-116. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(99)00095-3

Busby, G., & Rendle, S. (2000). The transition from tourism on farms to farm tourism. *Tourism Management, 21*(6), 635-642. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(00)00011-X

Business Events Thailand. (2023). *Agritourism insights and trends.* https://intelligence.businesseventsthailand.com/files/insights/89915706179611.pdf

Carpio, C. E., Wohlgenant, M. K., & Boonsaeng, T. (2008). The Demand for Agritourism in the United States. *Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics, 33*(2), 254–269. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41220626

Castro, C. B., Armario, E. M., & Ruiz, D. M. (2007). The influence of market heterogeneity on the relationship between a destination's image and tourists' future behavior. *Tourism Management, 28*(6), 175-187. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2006.11.009

Champathong, K., Darunsontaya, T., & Rungmekarat, S. (2020). Effect of soil conditioner from fly ash on growth, yield and yield components of cassava in infertile soil. In *Proceedings of 58th Kasetsart University Annual Conference: Plants, Animals, Veterinary Medicine, Fisheries, Agricultural Extension and Home Economics* (92-98). Kasetsart University.

Chang, S., Li, Z., & Hsu, C. H. C. (2019). The influence of natural landscape and cultural experiences on behavioral intentions. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 27*(3), 392-409.

Chang, Y.-C.; Yeh, T.-M.; Pai, F.-Y.; Huang, T.-P. (2018). Sport activity for health!! The effects of karate participants' involvement, perceived value, and leisure benefits on recommendation intention. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 15*, 953. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph15050953

Chen, C. F., & Phou, S. (2013). A closer look at destination loyalty: A case study of Taiwan. *Tourism Management, 36*, 386-396. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2012.10.009

Chen, C. F., & Tsai, D. (2007). How destination image and evaluative factors affect behavioral intentions? *Tourism Management, 28*(4), 1115-1122. https://doi.org/10.1016/ j.tourman.2006.07.007

Chen, J. S., & Gursoy, D. (2001). An investigation of tourists' destination loyalty and preferences. *Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 13*(5), 79–85. https://doi.org/10.1108/09596110110495012

Chen, J. S., Wang, W., & Prebensen, N. K. (2016). Travel companions and activity preferences of nature-based tourists. *Tourism Review, 71*(1), 45–56. https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-06-2015-0024

Chi, C. G., & Qu, H. (2008). Examining the structural relationships of destination image, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty: An integrated approach. *Tourism Management, 29*(4), 624-636. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2007.06.007

Chi, X., Lee, S. K., Ahn, Y., & Kiatkawsin, K. (2020). Tourist-Perceived Quality and Loyalty Intentions towards Rural Tourism in China. *Sustainability, 12*(9), 3614. https://doi.org/10.3390/su12093614

Chin, C. H., Wong, W. P. M., & Wahap, D. Z. B. A. A. (2022). Effects of destination appeal and tourism infrastructure on rural tourism destination competitiveness and revisit intention: A study in Bario Kelabit Highland. *Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences (PJCSS), 16*(3), 366-386.

Chomchalow, N., & Na Songkhla, P. (2008). Thai mango export: A slow-but-sustainable development. *AU Journal of Technology, 12*(1), 1–8.

Churchill, G. & Surprenant, C. (1982). An investigation into the determinants of customer satisfaction. *Journal of Marketing Research, 19*, 491-504. https://doi.org/10.1177/002224378201900410

Cialdini, R. B., & Goldstein, N. J. (2004). Social influence: Compliance and conformity. *Annual Review of Psychology, 55*(1), 591–621. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.55.090902.142015

Craggs, R., & Schofield, P. (2011). The street as a venue for tourism: The role of public realm improvements in urban tourism. *Tourism Management, 32*(5), 1093-1102. https://doi.org/ 10.1016/j.tourman.2010.09.010

Cronin, J. J., & Taylor, S. A. (1992). Measuring service quality: A reexamination and extension. *Journal of Marketing, 56*(1), 55-68. https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299205600304

Cronjé, D. F., & du Plessis, E. (2020). A review on tourism destination competitiveness. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 45,* 256-265. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2020.06.012

Crouch, G. I. (2011). Destination competitiveness: An analysis of determinant attributes. *Journal of Travel Research, 50*(1), 27–45.

Crouch, G. I., & Ritchie, J. R. B. (1999). Tourism, competitiveness, and societal prosperity. *Journal of Business Research, 44*(3), 137-152.

Cucculelli, M., & Goffi, G. (2016). Does sustainability enhance tourism destination competitiveness? Evidence from Italian Destinations. *Journal of Cleaner Production, 111*(B), 370-382. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2014.12.069

Cvelbar, L. K., Dwyer L., Koman M., Mihalic. (2015). Drivers of destination competitiveness in Tourism. A global investigation. *Journal of Travel Research, 55*(8), 1041-1050. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287515617299

Dagger, T. S., Danaher, P. J., & Gibbs, B. J. (2011). How often versus how long: The interplay of contact frequency and relationship duration in customer-reported service relationship strength. *Journal of Service Research, 14*(4), 387-401. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670511411172

Dakhathok, W., & Kaewnuch, K. (2017). Guidelines to Increase Accommodation Service Capacity for Tourism of Nakhonratchasima Province. *Dusit Thani College Journal, 11*(2), 106-123.

Dawwiangkan, K., & Pinta, L. (2020). Factors influencing tourists' decision-making in ecotourism destinations. *Thai Tourism Journal, 6*(3), 200-214.

Dupeyras, A. & MacCallum, N. (2013). *Indicators for Measuring Competitiveness in Tourism: A Guidance Document*. Paris: OECD.

Dwyer, L., & Kim, C. (2003). Destination competitiveness: Determinants and indicators. *Current Issues in Tourism, 6*(5), 369-414. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500308667962

Ekinci, Y., Dawes, P. L., & Massey, G. R. (2021). The impact of travel companions on the emotional experiences and satisfaction of tourists. *Journal of Travel Research, 60*(6), 1223–1237. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287520981148

Enright, M. J., & Newton, J. (2004). Tourism destination competitiveness: A quantitative approach. *Tourism Management, 25*(6), 777-788. https://doi.org/10.1016/ j.tourman.2004.06.008

Flanigan, S., Blackstock, K., & Hunter, C. (2014). Agritourism from the perspective of providers and visitors: A typology-based study. *Tourism Management, 40*, 394-405. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.07.004

Fleischer, A., & Pizam, A. (1997). Rural tourism in Israel. *Tourism Management, 18*(6), 367-372. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(97)00035-4

Forsyth, P., Gillespie, D., & McGilvray, M. (2018). *Numerical simulations of particle transport and deposition experiments at gas turbine temperatures*. http://dx.doi.org/10.2514/6.2018-3238

Gohary, A., Pourazizi, L., Madani, F. & Chan, E.Y. (2020). Examining Iranian tourists memorable experiences on destination satisfaction and behavioral intentions. *Current Issues in Tourism, 23*(2), 131-136. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2018.1560397

Gomezelj, D. O., & Mihalič, T. (2008). Destination competitiveness-Applying different models, the case of Slovenia. *Tourism Management, 29*(2), 294-307. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2007.03.009

Gursoy, D., & McCleary, K. W. (2004). An integrative model of tourists' information search behavior. *Annals of Tourism Research, 31*(2), 353–373. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2003.12.004

Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2019). *Multivariate Data Analysis* (8th ed.). Cengage.

Hatfield, E., Cacioppo, J. T., & Rapson, R. L. (1994). Emotional contagion. Cambridge University Press.

Hirankitti, P., Choibamroong, T., & Sivarak, A. (2014). Factors influencing Thai tourists' perception in agritourism. *Journal of Thai Tourism Studies, 6*(2), 23-35.

Iamkijakarn, P., & Khwankitwisala, K. (2018). The impact of community-based agritourism management in Rayong. *Journal of Thai Community Tourism, 4*(1), 98-115.

Isichaiyakul, R., & Silpa-archa, W. (2015). *Policy for Enhancing Agritourism Potential to Accommodate ASEAN Tourists*. Thailand Science Research and Innovation.

Jeong, Y., & Kim, S. (2019). A study of event quality, destination image, perceived value, tourist satisfaction, and destination loyalty among sport tourists. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics, 32*(4), 940–960. https://doi.org/10.1108/APJML-02-2019-0101

Keaveney, Susan M. (1995). Customer Behavior in Services Industries: An Exploratory Study. *Journal of Marketing, 59* (2), 71-82. https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299505900206

Keller, P., & Smeral, E. (1997). Tourism: Managing for long-term sustainability. *Tourism Economics, 3*(1), 97-103.

Khamung, R. (2015). A study of cultural heritage and sustainable agriculture conservation as a means to develop rural farms as agritourism destinations. *Silpakorn University Journal of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts, 15*(3), 1–35.

Khunawut, K., & Phinij, A. (2017). Marketing Competitiveness of Nakhon Chai Burin Tourism. *MBA-KKU Journal, 10*(1), 199-219.

Lane, B. (1994). What Is Rural Tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 2*, 7-21. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09669589409510680

Lee, C. F., & King, B. (2006). Assessing destination competitiveness: Hot springs tourism in Taiwan. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, 11*(1), 47-67. https://doi.org/10.1080/10941660500500655

Lee, J. B., Kinsey, L. E., & Cherney, L. R. (2024). Typing versus handwriting: A preliminary investigation of modality effects in the writing output of people with aphasia. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology. Advance online publication*, 1-9. https://doi.org/10.1044/2024_AJSLP-23-00344

Li, X., & Cai, L. A. (2012). The effects of personal values on travel motivation and behavior*. Journal of Travel Research, 51*(4), 473–487. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287511418360

Liu, C. H. S., & Lee, T. (2016). Service quality and price perception of service: Influence on word-of-mouth and revisit intention. Journal of Air Transport Management, 52, 42-54. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jairtraman.2015.12.007

Liu, C., & Lee, C. (2016). The effect of service quality and value on tourists' word-of-mouth communication. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 19*, 27-36. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2016.04.003

Lucha, C., Ferreira, G., & Walker, M. (2016). Sustainability practices of agritourism businesses: A case study in Virginia and Tennessee. *Sustainability, 8*(6), 535. https://doi.org/10.3390/su8060535

Madhyamapurush, W., Saksirikhun, P., & Smerchuar, N. (2021). Marketing mix factors affecting the purchase of cultural souvenirs by Thai consumers in Phayao province, Thailand. *Journal of Management Information and Decision Sciences, 24*(Special Issue 1), 1–8.

Maksimovic, M., Tadic, M., & Mitrovic, S. (2015). Agritourism potential of Serbia. *Procedia Economics and Finance, 19*, 260-270. https://doi.org/10.1016/S2212-5671(15)00027-6

Maraphot, K., & Sombun, T. (2023). Development of Agritourism Routes to Promote Tourism in Phanom Sarakham District, Chachoengsao Province. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Science and Communication, 6*(4), 210-223.

Maxham III, J. G. (2001). Service recovery's influence on consumer satisfaction, positive word-of-mouth, and purchase intentions. *Journal of Business Research, 54*(1), 11-24. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963(00)00114-4

Michael, N., Reisinger, Y., & Hayes, J. P. (2019). The UAE's tourism competitiveness: A business perspective. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 30*, 53-64. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2019.02.002

Ministry of Public Health. (2016). *Thai Herbal City Development Initiative*. https://moh.go.th

Nam, J., Ekinci, Y., and Whyatt, G. (2011). Brand equity, brand loyalty and consumer satisfaction. *Annals of Tourism Research, 38*(3), 1009-1030. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2011.01.015

National Tourism Policy Office. (2023). *Thailand's tourism development strategies*. https://www.tourism.go.th

Nazir, M. U., Yasin, I., Tat, H. H., Khalique, M., & Mehmood, S. A. (2021). The Influence of International Tourists' Destination Image of Pakistan on Behavioral Intention: The Roles of Travel Experience and Media Exposure. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, 1-25. https://doi.org/10.1080/15256480.2021.1938782

Oliver, R. L. (2014). *Satisfaction: A Behavioral Perspective on the Consumer*. UK: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315700892

Oppermann, M. (2000). Tourism destination loyalty. *Journal of Travel Research, 39*(1), 78–84. https://doi.org/10.1177/004728750003900110

Patamaritthakil, T., & Promlang, A. (2024). Guidelines for the Development of Agritourism in Wang Nam Khiao District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province. *Thai Journal of Hospitality and Tourism, 19*(2), 3-5.

Patterson, P. (1993). Expectations and product performance as determinants of satisfaction for a high involvement purchase. *Psychology & Marketing, 10*(5), 449-465. https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.4220100507

Pearce, D. G. (1997). Competitive Destination Images: Analysis of Association Meeting Planners' Perceptions. *Tourism Management, 17*(3), 175-82. https://doi.org/10.1016/0261-5177(96)00004-0

Peoplaid. (2018). *Prachinburi province*. https://peoplaid.com/2018/11/05/prachinburi-province/

Phillip, S., Hunter, C., & Blackstock, K. (2010). A typology for defining agritourism. *Tourism Management, 31*(6), 754–758. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2009.08.001

Pike, S., & Page, S. J. (2014). Destination marketing organizations and destination marketing: a narrative analysis of the literature. *Tourism Management, 41*, 202-227.

Pojana, R., Prasertsanban, K., Duangwanthong, K., Kongdit, S., & Nawattanatee. T. (2024). A study of tourist behavior and satisfaction with agritourism activities: A case study of Bamboo Garden by Yai Lee Agritourism Site. *Journal of Tourism, Leisure, and Hospitality Management, 5*(2), 39-48. https://so04.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/JTHM/article/ view/254231

Prachinburi Provincial Office. (2023). *Prachinburi Provincial Development Plan 2018-2022* (Revised in 2022). https://prachinburi.go.th

Prachinburi Tourism Guide. (n.d.). *Mai Khed Farmstay: An immersive agritourism destination*. https://www.tourismthailand.org

Prayag, G. (2009). Tourist’ evaluations of destination image, satisfaction and future behavioral intention the case of Mauritius. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 26*(8), 836-853. https://doi.org/10.1080/10548400903358729

Prayag, G., & Ryan, C. (2012). Antecedents of tourists' loyalty to Mauritius: The role and influence of destination image, satisfaction, and place attachment. *Journal of Travel Research, 51*(3), 342–356. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287511410321

Responsible Tourism in Thailand. (2016). *Tourism statistics and economic impact of agritourism in Thailand.* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Responsible_tourism_in_Thailand

Ritchie J.R.B., & Crouch G.I. (2010). A model of destination competitiveness/sustainability: Brazilian perspectives. *Revista de Administracao Publica, 44*(5), 1049-1066. https://doi.org/10.1590/S0034-76122010000500003

Ritchie, J. R. B., & Crouch, G. I. (2003). *The Competitive Destination: A Sustainable Tourism Perspective*. CABI.

Roman, M., Roman, M., Prus, P., & Szczepanek, M. (2020). Tourism competitiveness of rural areas: Evidence from a region in Poland. *Agriculture, 10*(11), 569. https://doi.org/10.3390/agriculture10110569

Sarnsook, P. (2016). Guidelines for the Development of Agritourism Promotion in Nakhon Nayok Province. *Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University Journal, 8*(2.1), 418-424.

Schmitt, B. (1999). Experiential marketing. *Journal of Marketing Management, 15*(1-3), 53-67. https://doi.org/10.1362/026725799784870496

Sgroi, F., Tudisca, S., Testa, R., & Di Trapani, A. M. (2020). The rural tourism as development opportunity or farms: A Case Study in Southern Italy. *Sustainability, 12*(22), 9575. https://doi.org/10.3844/ajabssp.2014.407.419

Soonthonsmai, V. (2022). a causal relationship model of health tourism destination image and marketing strategies affecting tourists' intention to revisit prachinburi province. *The Journal Editorial Office, Community Research Journal, Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University, 6*(1), 37-50. https://doi.org/10.14456/nrru-rdi.2022.4

Sribenjachoti, T., Panichatra, S., Saengkhae, N., Sonbundit, W., Somaruk, P., &Thongla, P. (2018). *Agritourism Management in Chanthaburi Province*. Thailand Science Research and Innovation.

Su, L., Cheng, J., & Swanson, S. (2021). The companion effect on adventure tourists' satisfaction and subjective well-being: The moderating role of gender. *Tourism Review, 77*(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-02-2021-0063

Suhartanto, D., Dean, D., T. Chen, B., & Kusdibyo, L. (2020). Tourist experience with agritourism attractions: what leads to loyalty?. *Tourism Recreation Research, 45*(3), 364-375. https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2020.1736251

Suwankut, K., Charoenrup, N., & Benjatikul, K. (2021). Agritourism management models in Rayong and Chanthaburi Provinces*. Rambhai Barni Research Journal, 15*(1), 52-53.

Tew, C., & Barbieri, C. (2012). The perceived benefits of agritourism: The provider's perspective. *Tourism Management, 33*(2), 215–224. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2011.02.005

Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau. (2023). *Business Events Thailand*. https://www.businesseventsthailand.com/en

Thibaut, J. W., & Kelley, H. H. (1959). *The Social Psychology of Groups*. John Wiley & Sons.

Thonglatong, P., & Samarak. P. (2020). Potential Management of Agritourism Sites in Chanthaburi Province. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, Ubon Ratchathani University, 11*(1), 190-213.

Tourism Authority of Thailand. (2023). *Prachinburi Tourism Highlights*. https://tatnakhonnayok.org

Tourism Authority of Thailand. (n.d.). *Phra Chao Borommawong Thoe Krom Muen Phitak Montri*. https://www.tourismthailand.org

Tourism Authority of Thailand. (n.d.). *Prachinburi: Discover the province of nature and culture*. https://www.tourismthailand.org/Destinations/Provinces/Prachin-Buri/230

United Nations Development Programme. (n.d.). *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Thailand*. https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals

Vada, S., Prentice, C., Filep, S., & King, B. (2022). The influence of travel companionships on memorable tourism experiences, well-being, and behavioural intentions. *Tourism Management, 88*, 104396. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2021.104396

Wang, C., & Hsu, M. K. (2010). The Relationships of Destination Image, Satisfaction, and Behavioral Intentions: An Integrated Model. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 27*(8), 829-843. https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2010.527249

Wilde S.J., & Cox C. (2008). Linking destination competitiveness and destination development: Findings from a mature Australian tourism destination. In: *Proceedings of the travel and* *tourism research association (TTRA) European chapter conference - competition in tourism: business and destination perspectives (*467-478). Helsinki, Finland.

Williams, P., & Soutar, G. N. (2009). Value, satisfaction and behavioral intention in an adventure tourism context. *Annals of Tourism Research, 36,* 413-438. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2009.02.002

Wong, J.-Y., & Teoh, T.-S. (2015). The influence of customer-based brand equity on tourism destination competitiveness. *International Journal of Business and Society, 16*(4), 614-627.

Wu, H. C., & Li, T. (2017). A study of experiential quality, perceived value, heritage image, experiential satisfaction, and behavioral intentions for heritage tourists. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research, 41*(8), 904-944. https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348014525638

Xu, J., & Au, C. S. T. (2023). *Does travel personality really affect travel behavior*?. Paper presented at asia pacific tourism association (apta) annual conference 2023.

Yacob, S., Erida, E., & Siregar, A. P. (2021). The loyalty of rural tourism destination: A perspective of destination quality perception, satisfaction, and behavior intention in Indonesia. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science (2147-4478), 10*(7), 257-265. https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v10i7.1404

Yang, Z., & Peterson, R. T. (2004). Customer perceived value, satisfaction, and loyalty: The role of *switching costs. Psychology & Marketing, 21*(10), 799-822. https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20030

Žabkar, V., Brenčič, M., & Dmitrović, T. (2010). Modelling perceived quality, visitor satisfaction and behavioral intentions at the destination level. *Tourism Management, 31*(4), 537-546. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2009.06.005

Zaichkowsky, J. L. (1985). Measuring the involvement construct. *Journal of Consumer Research, 12*(3), 341–352. https://doi.org/10.1086/208520

Zainuddin, Z., Chu, S. K. W., Shujahat, M., & Perera, C. J. (2020). The impact of gamification on learning and instruction: A systematic review of empirical evidence. *Educ. Res. Rev.*, *30*, 100326. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2020.100326

Zeithaml, V. A., Berry, L. L., & Parasuraman, A. (1996). The behavioral consequences of service quality. *Journal of Marketing, 60*(2), 31-46. https://doi.org/10.2307/1251929

Zhang, C., Jiang, F., Wang, S., & Sun, S. (2020). *A new decomposition ensemble approach for tourism demand forecasting: Evidence from major source countries*. https://arxiv.org/abs/2002.09201

Zhang, H., Wu, Y., & Buhalis, D. (2018). A model of perceived image, memorable tourism experiences and revisit intention. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 8*, 326-336. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2017.06.004

THE RELATIONSHIP OF ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION, FOREIGN CUSTOMER TRUST, DISTRIBUTION PARTNERSHIP ON BUSINESS PERFORMANCE-THAI FURNITURE AND HOME DECORATION EXPORT COMPANY

Nataorn Mahatamnuchok[a*], Thanatmet Wacharapibulwong[b]
Watchara Wetprasit[c], Prasitpon Kengthong[d]

[a b c d] Faculty of Management Science, Phetchaburi Rajabhat University, Phetchaburi, Thailand
[*]Corresponding author's e-mail: nataorn.mah@mail.pbru.ac.th

Received: 6 June 2024 / Revised: 28 December 2024 / Accepted: 29 December 2024

ABSTRACT
Purpose – To investigate the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, foreign customer trust, distribution partnerships, and business performance.
Methodology – The research was collected from 400 participants who work in the Thai furniture and home decoration export industry. The quantitative approach was used in this research. This research analysis method was interested in operating on structural equation modeling (SEM).
Results – The finding demonstrated the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, distribution partnership, and foreign customer trust, which have a positive effect on business performance.
Implications – Entrepreneurs and business owners in the export sector should recognize the value of entrepreneurial orientation, foreign customer trust, and distribution partnerships for success. This model assists business owners to deeply contribute to explaining the significance of the role of entrepreneurial orientation in increasing business performance.
Originality/Value – The framework model shows the significance of the relationship of entrepreneurial orientation, foreign customer trust, and distribution partnerships on business performance. The research explains the advantage of foreign customer trust and distribution partnerships on business performance for entrepreneurial aspects. All variables are crucial to be achieved in a company.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial orientation, Foreign customer trust, Distribution partnership, Business performance

Paper Type: Research Article

INTRODUCTION
International trade is the main source of income for several countries around the world. According to the World Trade Organization (2023) reported that the global economy has dramatically grown because of international consumption expanding. Then, a positive global economy has an excellent signal for international entrepreneurs who are looking to sell products and services. In Asian countries, the Bank of Thailand (2022) forecasted that the economy would rise at 3.8% for 2024. Many countries face increasing demographic shifts, digital transformation, technology modernization, and the next generation of higher education. This signal can lead to research and development of new products and services for serving consumers' needs. Especially, global furniture is expanded to rise by 3.1% in 2022 as the millennial generation is becoming more married. Asia office furniture market overview (2024) reported that the furniture industry

Citation:
Mahatamnuchok, N., Wacharapibulwong, T., Wetprasitc, W., & Kengthong, P. (2024). The relationship of entrepreneurial orientation, foreign customer trust, distribution partnership on business performance-Thai furniture and home decoration export company. RMUTT Global Business Accounting and Finance Review, 8(2), 85-93. https://doi.org/10.60101/gbafr.2024.274637

is strongly competitive in its economic situation, with various players in the international market. For example, furniture and home décor in Asian markets such as Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam are becoming more interesting due to an increase in demand. Main export products are footwear, computers, spare parts, and textiles. Furthermore, the home decorations market is expected to increase around 4.77% between 2023 and 2028. According to the consumption of furniture and décor has been gradually increasing due to disposable incomes, technology preference and e-commerce growth. The growth of e-commerce has made it easier for customers who would like to spend money to purchase furniture and home decoration products.

The purpose of this study would be to examine the relationship between entrepreneur orientation, foreign customer trust, distribution partnerships and business performance in furniture and home decorations in export company.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurial Orientation

According to Diandra and Azmy (2021) was initially proposed that entrepreneurial orientation referred to a pattern of behavior and decision-making that relates to business performance. Furthermore, it deals with strategy to identify corporate ventures, which relates to proactiveness and attitude of business owners. Previous studies by Ripollés and Blesa (2022) said that entrepreneurial orientation can be defined as any ideas of business owners doing something new and seeking new opportunities in markets. Entrepreneurial orientation means processes, practices, and decision-making styles of a company. It seems to be an important aspect of decision styles, practices, and method uses. According to Rezaei and Ortt (2018), the significance of an entrepreneur consists of three dimensions, which are innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking. Firstly, innovativeness is regarded as the ability to develop new products, services, and processes to serve the markets. Proactiveness refers to how managers and business owners prepare the team player for the future. It emphasizes knowledge to managers over the processes of shaping strategy and decision-making, development of EO capability, and focusing on customer satisfaction to improve firm performance (Cuevas-Vargas et al., 2019; Solikahan and Mohammad, 2019). Risk-taking is defined as a business owner who challenges some obstacles in international markets such as exchange rates, customer behavior, economic situation consumption, technology changing, and digital marketing.

Foreign Customer Trust

The importance of foreign customer trust can be reflected in the willingness of consumers to purchase products (Mandira et al., 2018). Furthermore, Ahamed and Noboa (2022) have discussed customer trust as it refers to the perception, expectation, attitude, and intention toward products and services. According to Paparoidamis et al. (2019) stated that customer trust in international markets can be defined as the customer's confidence in products and services with an excellent production process, good selection management and material, and having a relationship with customers. Trust and loyalty strongly encourage customer satisfaction. Foreign customer trust is considered as three elements: Firstly, cultural sensitivity can be defined as the respecting and understanding of values, cultural norms, and groups from diverse cultural backgrounds, customer behavior, and preferences of international customers (Olutuase, 2018). Secondly, product quality refers to how well products can describe their durability, reliability, effectiveness, and how well-made they are to serve final customers. Thirdly, localization can be introduced as the ability to adapt products and services to fit the needs of local markets. To summarize, foreign customer trust is about the ability of a company to build trust through their operation and manufacturing.

Distribution partnership

Distribution partnerships can be referred to as intermediaries through which goods and services pass until they reach the final buyer or the end customer and maintain relationships with local distributors, such as intensive and selective distributors (Vapa & Tankosić, 2019). A local distributor is a person or group who is responsible for delivering products and services to retail, which sell directly to end users (Lee, 2018). Furthermore, great partners can spread products to outshine competitors on the shelf, implement marketing and sales strategy, and promote products. Distribution partnerships can be divided into two types, which are called indirect and selective distribution partners. Firstly, an indirect partner is identified as an individual or group who needs a sales representative or needs to sell directly to end-users. Secondly, selective distribution partners can be regarded as the partners who can deliver our products and services to specific retail stores and premium outlets (Nyu et al., 2022).

Business performance

Based on previous study, business performance can be identified as the firm's reflection of how the company spends resources, potentially maintains the company's reputation, and delivers products and services for responding to final customers (Gu & Luo, 2022). As Ruzekova et al. (2020) mentioned that business performance in the international trade context has been measured into two categories, which are known as financial and non-financial dimensions. According to Ortigueira-Sancheza et al. (2022) stated that the financial dimension refers to the efficiency of a firm's ability to achieve its objectives and reflect through a sales-related performance such as international market share, export intensity, export sales growth, export sales volume, export sales efficiency, and export ratio. Secondly, the non-financial dimension can be measured as the efficiency of a firm's ability to reach the target goals with customer satisfaction, quality of customer service, company reputation compared to competitors, and customer loyalty.

Hypotheses development

Prior research has shown that the characteristics of owners are necessary to raise customer trust. According to Omar et al. (2022) entrepreneurial orientation positively affects customer trust. The relevance of Dong et al. (2020) demonstrated that 389 firms that come from emerging economies with a high level of entrepreneurial orientation and cognitive trust can improve customer trust. Cuevas-Vargas et al. (2019) said that entrepreneurial orientation positively influences firm performance and customer satisfaction. It impacts business performance in a positive manner, both directly and indirectly, through customer satisfaction. Furthermore, Yang et al. (2021) proposed that risk-taking, innovation, and proactivity positively affect the initial trust of venture capability through defensive impression management strategies. Following studies by Ismail et al. (2017) has been proposed that the significance of customer trust is positively related to business performance. This means trust from customers can increase sales profit and sales revenue. Moreover, trust affects competitive advantage through entrepreneur commitment; for example, entrepreneurs spend the best resources into operation for serving customers. This is consistent with Arifin (2019) suggested that 307 furniture companies in Jepara, which are exporters in the international furniture trade market, trust has positively influenced profit margins on export furniture. This means customer trust can increase the maximum profit in an organization. According to Platin and Ergun (2017) mentioned that the entrepreneurial orientation is positively related to small and medium enterprises sales growth and business performance.

In particular, export must face up to risk-taking more proactively and innovatively. Empirical studies by Alam et al. (2022) reported that 407 Malay-based SMEs in Malaysia, entrepreneur orientation has significantly influenced business performance. The finding has shown that risk-taking, proactiveness, innovativeness, and achievement factors are significant components of entrepreneurial orientation. Rezaei and Ortt (2018) provided that there is a positive relationship observed between innovativeness and R&D performance and between proactiveness and marketing and sales performance in 279 high-tech small-to-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Robb et al. (2020) said that 225 exporting firms that were located in South Africa have found that well-entrepreneurial orientation as a strategy-making process can bring about high-level business performance in emerging markets. Hossaina and Azmib (2021) and Ringo et al. (2022) mentioned the importance of entrepreneurial orientation, which is innovativeness and proactiveness that positively and significantly impact business performance. Chelliah, Aravindan and Muthaiyah (2022) said that the study findings highlight that risk-taking and open innovation have no direct relationship with SMEs' performance. However, the mediation role of cost leadership, risk-taking, and open innovation has a significant association with performance. Furthermore, the findings indicate that proactiveness, competitive aggressiveness, and autonomy have a positive and direct relationship with performance, whereas in the presence of cost leadership, competitive aggressiveness has a partial mediating effect. Dewi and Ahamat (2018) said that the results of this study concluded that the entrepreneurial orientation has a significant positive impact on the achievement of organizational performance, either directly or with the mediation of business model innovation and the collaboration. These states lead to a hypothesis as follows:

H1: Entrepreneurial orientation has a positive relationship with foreign customer trust.
H2: Entrepreneurial orientation has a positive relationship with distribution partnership.
H3: Foreign customer trust has a positive relationship with business performance.
H4: Distribution partnership has a positive relationship with business performance.
H5: Entrepreneurial orientation has a positive relationship with business performance.

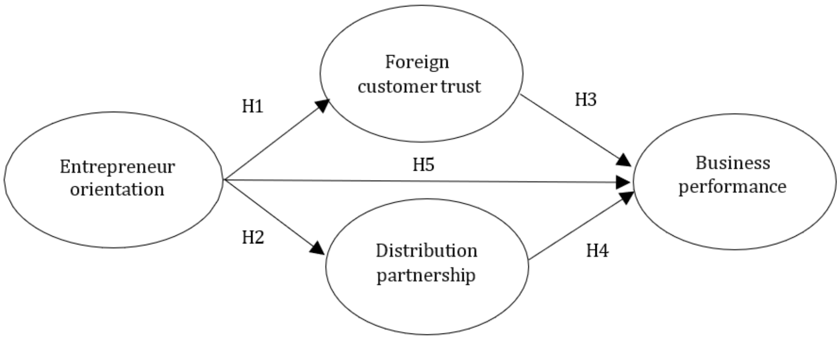


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

METHODOLOGY

The population is an unknown number of participants who work in the furniture and decoration industry. Cochran (1997) was used to calculate the sample size, and the samples were 400 people at the confidence level of 95%. Participants are working in the furniture and decoration industry, which includes managers, sales assistant managers, international sales managers, and operation staff. Measurement scales were developed based on previous studies. The variables were measured by a Likert scale that ranged from '1 = strongly disagree' to '5 = strongly agree.'.

The index of item-objective congruence is the best-known assessment of measurement instruments. Thus, the index of item-objective congruence (IOC) was used to calculate the content validity. Each item was evaluated for content validity by three international business and marketing experts. The scores ranged from -1 to +1, indicating congruent +1, questionable 0, and incongruent -1. Thus, the value for the IOC indicator is considered acceptable when greater than or equal to 0.50 (Ismail & Zubairi, 2022).

The IOC index result demonstrated that all measurement items of entrepreneurial orientation, foreign customer trust, distribution partnership, and business performance ranged from 0.80 to 1.00, so the scale items were accepted. CFA Confirmatory factor analysis is examined in first and second order on the structural model. Hair et al., (2010) stated that the criteria of model fit should have $\chi 2/\mathrm{df} \leq 3.00$, GFI ≥ 0.90, CFI ≥ 0.90, NFI ≥ 0.90, AGFI ≥ 0.90, RMSEA ≤ 0.07, and RMR ≤ 0.08.

RESULTS

Demographic of the participant

The respondents' socioeconomic characteristics are shown in the table below.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of sample

Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	173	43.30
Female	227	56.70

Table 1. (Cont.)

Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age (years)		
Less than 20 years old	10	2.50
21-30 years old	78	19.50
31-40 years old	159	39.75
41-50 years old	112	28.00
51-60 years old	38	9.5.00
More than 61 years old	3	0.75
Education level		
Lower than bachelor's degree	51	12.75
Bachelor's degree	236	59.00
Master's degree	105	26.25
Higher than master's degree	8	2.00
Position		
Administrators/Executive committee	75	18.75
Manager/Head of department	98	24.50
Assistant manager	109	27.25
Operation staff	118	29.50
Working experience		
Less than 5 years	82	20.50
5-10 years	101	25.25
11-20 years	138	34.50
More than 21 years	79	19.75

Table 2 illustrates that all constructs and items are provided that the Cronbach's Alpha should be more than 0.5, factor loading for all variables should be greater than 0.5 (Hair, 2010), average extracted variance (AVE) should be more than 0.5, and construct reliability (CR) should be more than 0.6. Hence, all constructs and items are accepted. Variables show construct reliability and convergent validity of entrepreneurial orientation (α=0.83, AVE=0.69, CR=0.85), foreign customer trust (α=0.81, AVE=0.63, CR=0.87), distribution partnership (α=0.76, AVE=0.78, CR=0.89), financial performance (α=0.85, AVE=0.76, CR=0.81), and non-financial performance (α=0.92, AVE=0.69, CR=0.87). Factor loadings are from 0.68 to 0.90. Summary of Cronbach's Alpha, factor loading, average extracted variance, and construct reliability shows as Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of Cronbach's Alpha, Factor loading, Average extracted variance, Construct reliability

Construct and Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Factor loading	AVE	CR
Entrepreneurial orientation				
ENT1	0.83	0.76	0.69	0.85
ENT2		0.83		
ENT3		0.78		
ENT4		0.89		
Foreign customer trust				
FCT1	0.81	0.71	0.63	0.87
FCT2		0.73		
FCT3		0.89		
FCT4		0.84		
Distribution partnership				
DIP1	0.76	0.86	0.78	0.89
DIP2		0.73		
DIP3		0.75		
DIP4		0.88		

Table 2. (Cont.)

Construct and Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Factor loading	AVE	CR
Business performance financial				
FN1	0.85	0.76	0.76	0.81
FN2		0.68		
FN3		0.90		
FN4		0.86		
Non-financial				
NFN1	0.92	0.89	0.69	0.87
NFN2		0.77		
NFN3		0.68		
NFN4		0.85		

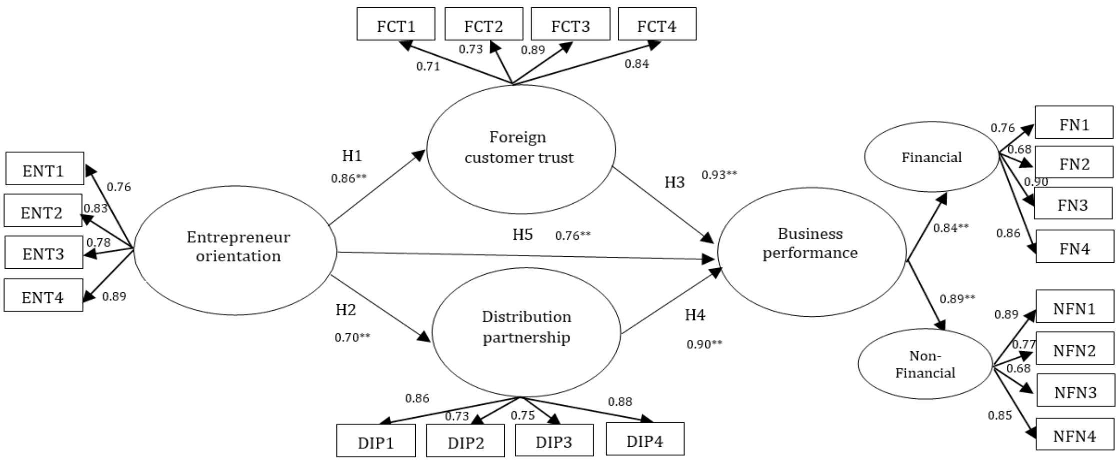
Hypotheses Testing Result

All hypotheses are supported at a significant level of 0.001, H1: Entrepreneurial orientation has a positive relationship with foreign customer trust (β=0.564, p<0.001). H2: Entrepreneurial orientation has a positive relationship with distribution partnership (β = 0.765). H3: Foreign customer trust has a positive relationship with business performance (β = 0.849). H4: Distribution partnership has a positive relationship with business performance (β=0.483).H5: Entrepreneurial orientation has a positive relationship with business performance (β = 0.586). All hypotheses are supported. The hypotheses development result is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Hypotheses development Result

Hypothese development	β	t-value	p-value	Result
H1: Entrepreneurial orientation → Foreign customer trust	0.564	10.65	***	Supported
H2: Entrepreneurial orientation → Distribution partnership	0.765	12.46	***	Supported
H3: Foreign customer trust → Business performance	0.849	15.77	***	Supported
H4: Distribution partnership → Business performance	0.483	10.01	***	Supported
H5: Entrepreneurial orientation→ Business performance	0.586	10.56	***	Supported

Remark: *** p < .001 (two-tailed test) Significance level as of 0.001



Remark: **p<.001 (significant level)

Figure 2. The model of relationship entrepreneurial orientation, foreign customer trust, distribution partnership and business performance.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Based on this research, this paper presents the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, foreign customer trust, distribution partnerships, and business performance. This research found that the significance of foreign customer trust is crucial to being successful in the company, which consists of cultural sensitivity, product quality, and localization. Sitorus and Yustisia (2018) said that customer trust has influenced business performance such as market growth, sales growth, and sales volume. This is relevant to Margaretha and Soelaiman (2022) said that entrepreneurial orientation, market orientation, and organizational culture have positive and significant impacts on business performance. Business owners should recognize the potential of trust and emphasize creating products by selecting the best raw material or ingredients into operation. Furthermore, the owners should concentrate on cultural sensitivity to adapting products and services following cultural perspective. Bico and Knezovic (2023) suggested that entrepreneurial orientation behavior is beneficial for companies in several aspects, such as setting up the direction for companies and building organization strategy. Moreover, the advantage of cultural sensitivity is the ability to understand people from diverse cultural backgrounds, with recognized values, norms, and social rules in different countries. In terms of business perspective, it involves adapting products and services, improving communication from various cultures, and building relationships with customers. Moreover, foreign customer trust is essential for business performance. Due to trust, it can bring about profit margin, sales growth, sales revenue, and customer retention and satisfaction. This means why international companies should focus on customer trust. Foreign customer trust is one of the components that affect business performance.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES

The quantitative methodology is only used for this research. Future studies may include qualitative approaches to contributing the result. Sampling techniques may not be covered in this search. Future development may compare the results between quantitative and qualitative approaches.

CONCLUSION

This research shows the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, foreign customer trust, distribution partnerships, and business performance. The empirical result has been used for both academics and practitioners. This study discovered that there is a positive relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, foreign customer trust, distribution partnerships, and business performance. This means that business owners should play an important role in the elements of entrepreneurial orientation, such as product innovation, executive decision-making, and being a good team player. Furthermore, the export manager should recognize improvements in product durability, reliability, user-friendliness, and new product design. Furthermore, business owners should build relationships with foreign local distributors. Because they can negotiate and sell products and services to customers easily. Great distribution partners lead to increased profitability in the company.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This article has not been completely succeeded without help from colleagues and team research.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest found in this research.

REFERENCES

Ahamed, A. J., & Noboa, F. (2022). Interconnectedness of trust-commitment-export performance dimensions: A model of the contingent effect of calculative commitment. *Cogent Business & Management, 9*(1), 2088461. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2022.2088461

Alam, S. S., Salleh M. F., Masukujjaman, M. Al-Shaikh, M. E., Makmor, N. & Makhbul, Z. K. (2022). Relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Business Performance among Malay-Owned SMEs in Malaysia: A PLS Analysis. *Sustainability*, *14*(10), 6308, 1-16. https://doi.org/10.3390/su14106308

Arifin, S. (2019). Trust advantage in export performance of SMEs for furniture exporters in Jepara. *International Journal of Economics, Business and Accounting Research, 3*(4), 283-295.

Asia office furniture market overview. (2024). *Asia office furniture market overview 2024-2028*. https://www.reportlinker.com/market-report/Consumer-Goods/10443/Office-Furniture?term=office%20furniture%20statistics&matchtype=b&loc_interest=&loc_physical=9074839&gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwx-CyBhAqEiwAeOcTdRP2pAT4TPpbtaxpT42sTEmTv_3vOSLVNhMEue_pI7Rc_wPCGiJDgxoCeygQAvD_BwE

Bank of Thailand. (2022). *Annual report (2022).* https://www.bot.or.th/th/research-and-publications/reports/annual-report/AnnualReport2022.html

Bico, A., & Knezovic, E. (2023). Assessing the entrepreneurial and intrapreneurial intentions of current and future labor forces: the role of entrepreneurial orientation, *European Journal of Management and Business Economics,* 1-17, https://doi.org/10.1108/EJMBE-09-2021-0245

Chelliah, M. K., Aravindan, K. L., & Muthaiyah, S. (2022). Entrepreneurial Orientation and Open Innovation Promote the Performance of Services SMEs: The Mediating Role of Cost Leadership. *Administrative Sciences, 13*(1), 1. https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci13010001

Cochran, W. G. (1977). *Sampling Techniques* (3d Ed.). Wiley.

Cuevas-Vargas, H. Parga-Montoya, N. & Fernández-Escobedo, R. (2019). Effects of Entrepreneurial Orientation on Business Performance: The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction—A Formative–Reflective Model Analysis. *SAGE Open, 9*(2), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019859088

Dewi, S., & Ahamat, A. (2018). The role of entrepreneurial orientation in achieving organization performance through business model innovation and asset relational collaboration. *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews, 6*(12), 100-105. https://doi.org/10.18510/hssr.2018.6212

Diandra, D., & Azmy, A. (2021). How Multidimensional Approach of Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) Effect Firm Performance: A Critical Review. *Journal Manajemen Bisnis, 12*(1), 30-40. http://dx.doi.org/10.18196/mabis.v12i1.9743

Dong, B., Xu, H., Luo. J., Nicol, D., & Liu, W. (2020). Many roads lead to Rome: How entrepreneurial orientation and trust boost the positive network range and entrepreneurial performance relationship. *Industrial Marketing Management, 88*, 173-185.

Gu, Y., & Luo, X. (2022). Research Methods on Business Performance Management, Advances in Economics. *Business and Management Research, 215*, 261-264. https://doi.org/10.2991/aebmr.k.220405.044

Hair, J.F., Black, B.B., Anderson, R., & Tatham, R.L. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis*. Pearson Education.

Hossaina, K., & Azmib, I. B. (2021). The effect of entrepreneurial orientation on the export performance of apparel industry. *Uncertain Supply Chain Management, 9*, 11–20.

Ismail, F. K., & Zubairi, A. M. (2022). Item objective congruence analysis for multidimensional items content validation of a reading test in Sri Lankan University. *English Language Teching, 15*(1), 106-117. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v15n1p106

Ismail, M. D., Alam, S. S., & Hamid, R. A. (2017). Trust, commitment, and competitive advantage in export performance of SMEs. *Gadjah Mada International Journal of Business, 19*(1), 1-18. https://doi.org/10.22146/gamaijb.22680

Lee, E. K. (2018). The management of international distribution channels: focusing on the perspective Korean exporting companies. *East Asian Journal of Business Economics, 6*(1), 47–63. https://doi.org/10.20498/EAJBE.2018.6.1.47

Mandira. D. A., Suliyanto, S., & Nawarini., A. (2018). The influence customer trust, service quality, and perceived price on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. *Journal of Research in Management, 1*(1), 16-21. http://dx.doi.org/10.32424/jorim.v1i1.16

Margaretha, C., & Soelaiman, L. (2022). Entrepreneurial Orientation, Market Orientation, and Organizational Culture on Business Performance, Advances in Economics. *Business and Management Research, 653*, 387-393. https://doi.org/10.2991/aebmr.k.220501.058

Nyu V, Nilssen, F., & Kandemir, D, (2022). Small exporting firm's choice of exchange mode in international marketing channels for perishable products: A contingency approach. *International Business Review, 31*(1), 101919. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2021.101919

Olutuase, S. O., Brijlal, P., Yan, B., & Ologundudu, E. (2018). Entrepreneurial Orientation intention: impact of Entrepreneurial ecosystem factors. *Journal of Entrepreneurship Education, 21*(3), 1-14.

Omar, N. A., Aris, H. M., Nazri, M. A., Jannat, T., & Alam, S. S. (2022). Does the relationship marketing orientation of an entrepreneur support agency improve performance? Evidence from small-and medium-size enterprises in Malaysia. *PLOS ONE, 17*(6), e0269319. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0269319

Ortigueira-Sancheza., L. C., Welshb H. B, & Steinc W. C. (2022). Innovation drivers for export performance. *Sustainable Technology and Entrepreneurship, 1*(2), 100013. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stae.2022.100013

Paparoidamis. N. G. Katsikeas, C. S. & Chumpitaz. R. (2019). The role of supplier performance in building customer trust and loyalty: A cross-country examination. *Industrial Marketing Management, 78*, 183-197. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2017.02.005

Platin, N., & Ergun., H.S. (2017). The Relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Performance; Evidence from Turkish SMEs. *Business and Management Studies, 3*(2), 78-89. https://doi.org/10.11114/bms.v3i2.2408

Rezaei, J., & Ortt, R., (2018). Entrepreneurial orientation and firm performance: the mediating role of functional performances. *Management Research Review, 41*(7), 878-900. https://doi.org/10.1108/MRR-03-2017-0092

Ringo, D. S., Tegambwage, A., & Kazungu, I. (2022). The effect of entrepreneurial orientation on export performance: Evidence from manufacturing SMEs in Tanzania. *Cogent Business & Management, 9*, 1-21. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2022.2157769

Ripollés, M., & Blesa, A. (2022). International new ventures' international performance: a matter of network entrepreneurial orientation and network management activities. *Management Research Review, 45*(1), 65-85. https://doi.org/10.1108/MRR-07-2020-0454

Robb, C., Kim, E.M., & Lee, J.W. (2020). Entrepreneurial Orientation and Export Performance of Emerging Market SMEs: The Moderating Role of Dynamic Capabilities in South Africa. *Journal of Distribution Science, 18*(12), 15-29. https://doi.org/10.15722/jds.18.12.202012.15

Ruzekova, V., Kittova, Z., & Steinhauser, D. (2020). Export performance as a measurement of competitiveness. *Journal of Competitiveness, 12*(1), 145–160. https://doi.org/10.7441/joc.2020.01.09

Sitorus, T. & Yustisia, M. (2018). The influence of service quality and customer trust toward customer loyalty: the role of customer satisfaction. *International Journal for Quality Research, 12*(3), 639-654. http://dx.doi.org/10.18421/IJQR12.03-06

Solikahan, E. Z., & Mohammad, A. (2019). Development of entrepreneurial orientation. *International Journal of Applied Business & International Management, 4*(1), 31-37. https://doi.org/10.32535/ijabim.v4i1.380

Vapa, B., & Tankosić.J.V. (2019). Management of the international distribution of channels in the SMEs international Business Strategy. *Original Scientific Article, 1*, 32-46. https://doi.org/10.5937/skolbiz1-23086

World Trade Organization. (2023). *World Trade Statistical Review 2023*. https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/publications_e/wtsr_2023_e.htm

Yang, H., Zhang, L., Wu, Y.J, Shi, H., & Xie, S. (2021). Influence of Entrepreneurial Orientation on Venture Capitalists' Initial Trust. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12*, 1-17. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.633771

ENHANCING CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION PERFORMANCE THROUGH COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY QUALITY

Metinee Rasadaraksa[a] , Sarakul Sukortprommee[b*]

[a b] Faculty of Business Administration, Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi, Pathum Thani, Thailand
[*]Corresponding author's e-mail: sarakul_s@rmutt.ac.th

Received: 31 October 2024 / Revised: 28 December 2024 / Accepted: 29 December 2024

ABSTRACT
Purpose – To study the mediating role of communication technology quality on the relationship between cross-culture and cross-cultural communication performance.
Methodology – This study surveyed 400 employees in a multicultural smart electronics manufacturing industry. The data collection instruments were questionnaires measuring cross-cultural acceptance (CCA), communication technology quality (TQ), and cross-cultural communication effectiveness (ECC). The data analysis used structural equation modeling (SEM) technique to test hypotheses and verify the analytical model.
Results – The results showed that cross-cultural acceptance did not directly affect cross-cultural communication (ECC) effectiveness, but communication technology quality (TQ) played an important role in mediating between cross-cultural acceptance (CCA) and cross-cultural communication effectiveness, with TQ facilitating communication clarity and reducing misunderstandings. The results confirmed that TQ had a positive effect on communication in culturally diverse organizations and was an important factor promoting communication effectiveness in diverse environments.
Implications – The study's findings highlight the need for organizations to invest in quality and adaptable communication technologies to support cross-cultural communication and reduce communication barriers arising from cultural differences. High-quality technology facilitates effective collaboration and cooperation.
Originality/Value – This research advances knowledge on organizational culture management by highlighting the important role of communication technology quality in enhancing cross-cultural communication effectiveness. The results confirm that technology quality can be an important mediator in managing cultural diversity in global organizations. This research provides a new perspective on the use of technology to support communication in organizations with employees from diverse cultures.

Keywords: Cross-cultural acceptance, Communication technology quality, Cross-cultural communication

Paper Type: Research Article

INTRODUCTION
Research on the impact of organizational culture and technology on internal communication in organizations with employees from different cultures is a topic of significant interest in the era of globalization. Geert Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions has been used as an important tool in understanding how cultural differences affect the communication styles of employees in organizations. Altaf's (2011) study indicated that cultural dimensions such as power distance, individualism, and uncertainty avoidance influence organizational communication. Cultural diversity in modern organizations is also complex and has a direct impact on employee performance. Wei (2024) stated that cultural diversity not only affects the creation of a suitable

Citation:
Rasadaraksa, M., & Sukortprommee, S. (2024). Enhancing cross-cultural communication performance through communication technology quality. RMUTT Global Business Accounting and Finance Review, 8(2), 94-108. https://doi.org/10.60101/gbafr.2024.277206

work atmosphere but also affects the understanding and coordination of teams from different backgrounds. These cultural differences can be both empowering and hindering factors, depending on how well employees are able to adapt and understand others' perspectives (Aneas & Sandín, 2009). Communication without understanding different cultures can lead to conflicts or misunderstandings in work performance. Therefore, understanding related factors such as cross-cultural communication, technological competence, and cultural adaptation are important in order to increase work efficiency and create a good work atmosphere in organizations with employees from different cultures.

In today's digital age, technology has become an important tool for communication and collaboration within an organization, especially organizations with employees from various cultures. However, the quality of technology is also a key factor in communicating with employees effectively and smoothly. Considering the importance of cultural intelligence, which Wang and Goh (2020) pointed out as the ability to understand, adapt, and communicate better in a culturally diverse environment, employees can create more mutual understanding during work. If the organization chooses to use quality technology and supports cross-cultural communication, these technologies can act as a medium that allows employees to exchange information quickly and completely, reducing the chances of misunderstandings or ineffective communication. On the other hand, if the technology used is not appropriate or cannot flexibly meet the needs of employees, cultural challenges may increase, which is what Szkudlarek et al. (2020) identified as an obstacle to communication in an organization. Limited technology can hinder employees from accurately and completely conveying content. Therefore, choosing high-quality technology that can meet the needs of employees from different cultural backgrounds is the key to reducing communication problems and promoting effective collaboration.

In today's digital age, technology has become an important tool for communication and collaboration within an organization, especially organizations with employees from various cultures. However, the quality of technology is also a key factor in communicating with employees effectively and smooth. Considering the importance of cultural intelligence, which Wang and Goh (2020) pointed out as the ability to understand, adapt, and communicate better in a culturally diverse environment, employees can create more mutual understanding during work. If the organization chooses to use quality technology and supports cross-cultural communication, these technologies can act as a medium that allows employees to exchange information quickly and completely, reducing the chances of misunderstandings or ineffective communication. On the other hand, if the technology used is not appropriate or cannot flexibly meet the needs of employees, cultural challenges may increase, which is what Szkudlarek et al. (2020) identified as an obstacle to communication in an organization. Limited technology can hinder employees from accurately and completely conveying content. Therefore, choosing high-quality technology that can meet the needs of employees from different cultural backgrounds is the key to reducing communication problems and promoting effective collaboration.

The research problem here focuses on the impact of Hofstede's cultural dimensions on communication between employees in a culturally diverse organization. These cultural differences can be barriers to communication and collaboration if not managed well. Cultural dimensions such as differences in power distance or individualism vs. collectivism can lead to employees having different perspectives and communication methods. Brett et al. (2020) pointed out that managing a team of employees from different cultures is more challenging when the technology used in the organization does not support effective cross-cultural communication. For instance, if the technology doesn't have features that make communication clear and easy to understand, or if it doesn't support language translation and showing cultural context, these technologies can get in the way of cross-cultural teams understanding each other and working together as much as possible. Meanwhile, Danso (2018) emphasizes the importance of building understanding of cultural diversity through technologies designed to enhance work in the organization. Quality technology that meets the needs of users from diverse backgrounds will help make collaboration more effective and reduce the chances of conflict or misunderstanding in the workplace. Therefore, managing and selecting appropriate technologies in a cross-cultural context is important for creating a positive atmosphere for collaboration.

Therefore, people want to know how Hofstede's cultural dimensions affect how well employees can communicate in businesses, especially in places where people from different cultures work together, which can be hard to do if it's not managed well. This research focuses on considering the mediating variable, the quality of communication technology, to assess how quality technology can support smooth cross-cultural communication. When organizations want to create an effective communication atmosphere in a diverse environment, selecting quality technology that can respond to the needs of employees from different cultures is important. This study expects to help organizations understand how to select appropriate technology, which can reduce communication limitations and increase collaboration efficiency. The findings from this study will help organizations design and use technology that effectively responds to cultural diversity, resulting in more effective communication and creating a strong and collaborative work atmosphere.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cross-culture Culture Acceptance

Geert Hofstede's organizational culture theory is an important tool in studying the perception and management of cultural differences that affect behavior and communication within an organization. The theory has five main cultural dimensions: power distance, individualism/collectivism, gender equality, uncertainty avoidance, and foresight, which affect communication patterns in organizations with interactions between different cultures. Ghosh's (2011) study showed that high power distance in an organization results in a communication gap between employees and management, which can reduce communication effectiveness. Similarly, Yalın's (2017) study found that employees from different cultural backgrounds often have difficulty adjusting when working in organizations with different cultures, affecting overall cohesion and performance. However, Hofstede (2011) proposed that organizations can manage these differences by recognizing the levels of each dimension and developing strategies that are consistent with the cultural context. Other studies support Hofstede's proposal to use the theory to promote communication and performance in organizations. For example, Chang et al.'s (2016, 2020) study found that the levels of individualism and uncertainty avoidance in different countries, such as the United States and China, affected employees' willingness to share knowledge. This reflects the challenges of building collaboration in organizations with employees from different cultures. In addition, Alanezi and Alansari (2016) studied gender differences in Hofstede's dimensions in Kuwait, finding that men and women have different attitudes towards this cultural dimension, leading to suggestions for adjusting management styles that are appropriate for each gender. Meanwhile, Fatehi et al. (2020) proposed expanding the dimensions of individualism and collectivism horizontally and vertically, which allows organizations to better consider the complexity and cultural diversity within the organization.

Communication Technology Quality

Improving the quality of communication technology in organizations is a crucial issue for improving employee performance and satisfaction. Many studies have studied the key components that affect communication quality, including tangibles, reliability, user understanding, efficiency, privacy, and responsiveness. For example, the SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985) is an instrument used to measure service quality, divided into five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The tangible dimension significantly contributes to user satisfaction in terms of technology accessibility and support within organizations. Fadilah and Handrianto's (2023) research shows that the availability of a helpdesk system enhances confidence in the quality of communication technology. In addition, devices and technologies that are placed in visible and easily accessible places help reduce the complexity of use and increase convenience for users, such as the work of Froehle and Roth (2004), who found that a system that allows users to access it readily increases the user experience and service quality. In addition, the reliability of communication technology is an important dimension that affects organizational satisfaction. Users should be able to check the accuracy and completeness of data sent through technology in order to build trust and confidence in the system. For example, Roses et al. (2009) found that the difference in how users and service providers see the quality of communication technology services can be narrowed by making the technology more reliable and allowing for data traceability. In addition, understanding users is an important factor that helps communication technology meet user needs appropriately. Designing a user-friendly system, such as using easy-to-understand language and clear font colors, helps users use the system conveniently and can solve problems by themselves when problems occur. The research of Gupta and Chen (1995) found that quality management that takes into account the user experience and needs is very important in an environment that relies on communication technology in an organization. In terms of efficiency, Kim et al.'s (2011) research explored the impact of SaaS (Software as a Service) quality management and found that the efficiency of an organization's communication system helps employees achieve their communication goals and increase their job satisfaction. An efficient and error-free system ensures that messages are delivered to the recipients in full and without distortion. In terms of privacy, Reichl's (2007) research emphasized the importance of user privacy and data protection in communication technology systems, especially in the digital age where access to data can be easily intruded. Having secure access protection systems, such as individual passwords and user-controllable privacy settings, is important to increase trust and confidence in the organization's system. In terms of user responsiveness, Park et al.'s (2014) research found that having communication that responds to users' needs in a timely manner is an important factor in increasing satisfaction with using communication technology in an organization. Effective customer service support and readiness to solve users' problems make communication technology systems more useful. In addition, training users is another element that helps increase skills and confidence in using them. Virima et al.'s (2019) research stated that organizations that organize training on the use of communication systems can effectively meet the needs and increase user satisfaction.

Cross-Cultural Communication Performance

Developing cross-cultural communication skills in organizations is an important issue that helps employees work effectively in a multicultural environment, which is a challenge for organizations in the era of globalization. Research in this area has addressed the development of foreign language skills in the context of intercultural collaboration, confirming that listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills are important factors that help employees communicate with colleagues from other countries with deep understanding. The research of Gilleard and Gilleard (2002) showed that developing these communication skills allows employees to better adapt to a multicultural environment. In addition, a study by Presbitero (2020) found that in a team working through virtual channels, employees' language skills and cultural competence facilitate clear communication and reduce anxiety from using foreign languages, which will result in higher employee performance and enhance teamwork in a multicultural organization. In addition to foreign language skills, developing communication skills in organizations plays an important role in creating an effective work atmosphere. The research of Rahmawati (2023) stated that clear communication, choosing the right communication channels, and understanding the cultural differences of colleagues are important factors in building good relationships between people in the organization. Similarly, the research of Cam and Minakova (2022) emphasized the importance of cross-cultural communication training. Such training not only enhances knowledge and understanding of different cultures, but also develops skills in selecting communication tools and ensuring the delivery of accurate information in a cross-cultural context. Masterson's (2020) research on communication technology says that using digital technology to encourage intercultural learning in the classroom can also be used in organizations to help people be more flexible when using technology for interpersonal communication and to help solve problems that come up because of misunderstandings in technologies that work together. Solodkova and Ismagilova's (2016) research also suggests that dynamic learning environments improve technology and communication skills in cross-cultural settings. These are important factors for improving work effectiveness and the ability to adapt to work in culturally diverse settings.

Hypothesis Development and Conceptual Framework

Past studies have found that intercultural communication is complex and directly affected by global cultural dimensions such as power distance and individualism (Altaf, 2011), indicating that pronounced cultural differences make it harder to understand and adapt to communication in a diverse society and may lead to misunderstandings or conflicts in organizations (Aneas & Sandín, 2009). In addition, Wei (2024) pointed out that cross-cultural management in organizations requires the development of employees' cultural competence and training to recognize and adapt to working across cultures, which results in employees being able to develop better skills in recognizing the cultures of others, promoting mutual understanding, and reducing conflicts between employees from different cultures. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that H1: Cross-culture acceptance has an impact on cross-cultural communication performance. In addition, many studies have shown that cultural values influence the acceptance and satisfaction of communication technologies in organizations (Sunny et al., 2019), with cultural dimensions such as power distance and uncertainty avoidance. This may affect how the trustworthiness of technology is perceived (Szkudlarek et al., 2020), which in some cases can lead employees in cultures with high power distance to be more cautious about using technology. The work of Brett, Behfar, and Kern (2020) also indicates that cultural differences result in a variety of abilities and skills required to use communication technologies within an organization. The research of Danso (2018) emphasizes the need to develop cultural competence to reduce differences in attitudes and skills in using technology in diverse environments, which will improve cross-cultural work efficiency. The hypothesis can be written as H2: Cross-culture has an impact on communication technology quality. Furthermore, research has shown a relationship between the quality of communication technology and cross-cultural communication efficiency, stating that the quality of communication technology directly affects employees' ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural contexts. The study by Cam and Minakova (2022) supports this hypothesis, showing that training in intercultural communication using technology can enhance employees' communication skills. In addition, Masterson (2020) demonstrates the use of digital technology in the classroom to develop cross-cultural communication skills, demonstrating that enhancing technology skills can enhance cross-cultural communication. This can be hypothesized as H3: Communication technology quality has an impact on cross-cultural communication performance. Finally, Altaf's (2011) research suggests that cross-cultural adoption may not fully enhance cross-cultural communication effectiveness if there is no technology that supports quality communication. The reason is that quality communication technology will help promote cultural adaptation and more effective communication in an organization. This is consistent with the findings of Fu and Hwang (2018), who showed that the use of modern technology in a cross-cultural communication context can enhance important communication skills in employees and enable them to communicate more effectively in situations where different cultures mix. From here, the hypothesis can be written as H4: Communication technology quality mediates the relationship between cross-culture and cross-cultural communication performance, which is shown in the figure below.

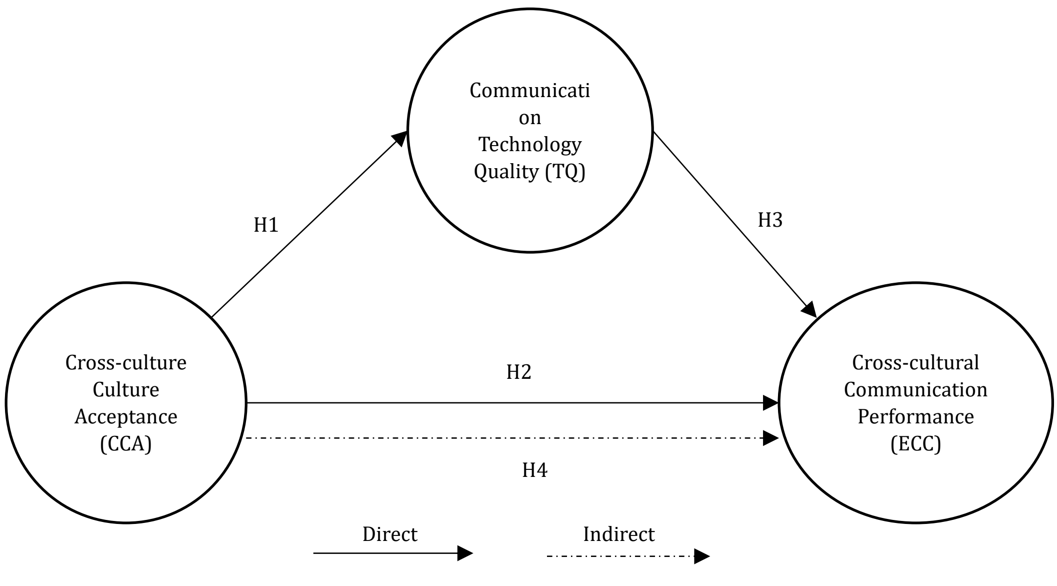


Figure 1. Research framework

METHODOLOGY

This research methodology focuses on studying the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication among employees in the smart electronic industry, which focuses on employees working in an environment with cultural exchange and a variety of foreign language communication skills. In order to obtain high-quality data for analysis and hypothesis testing in this research, the study defined the population and sample by considering Cochran's (1977) formula to find a sample size sufficient for analysis without having to know the total population. The Cochran formula was used to calculate the sample size for a large and unknown population, resulting in a basic sample size of 384 people. However, to prevent the risk of missing or incomplete data, 16 additional people were collected, resulting in a total sample size of 400 people in this study, which is sufficient to test the hypothesis with sophisticated and reliable statistical analysis. The sampling method in this research was simple random sampling, which is convenient. This method has the advantage of being easy to access respondents and saving time. Although it does not use a complicated random sampling process, the sufficient sample size calculated by Cochran and systematic convenience sampling make the data suitable for analysis and interpretation. Data collection for this research was conducted through a questionnaire designed to reflect the skills required for communication and technology use in a cross-cultural context, including acceptance and adaptation to foreign cultures. The questionnaire was developed to enable employees to reflect on their views on workplace communication skills, foreign language skills, and use of technology for communication.

In measuring the level of cross-culture culture acceptance according to Hofstede's dimensions, the focus is on measuring variables that reflect attitudes and acceptance of different cultural aspects. The main variables measured include power distance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term/short-term orientation. The instrument used to measure these variables is a questionnaire that uses a 5-point Likert Scale (1 = least to 5 = most) that asks respondents to rate their level of opinion. For example, a statement used in the variable “Power Distance” might be “Do you agree that some cultures are divided into social classes” or “Do you agree that the power of employees in the organization is different?”. As for the variable “Individualism/Collectivism”, the question might be “Do you agree that each culture values interpersonal relationships in society differently?” or “Do you agree that each culture values honesty?” Loyalty and mutual assistance are different.” For the “Masculinity/Femininity” dimension, it can be measured by asking “Do you agree that different cultures place different importance on gender equality?” or “Do you agree that different cultures clearly distinguish gender roles?” For Uncertainty Avoidance, it can be measured by asking “Do you agree that different cultures have different levels of uncertainty avoidance?” or “Do you agree that events affect decision-making differently?” And Long-term/Short-term Orientation can be measured by asking “Do you agree that different cultures place different importance on short-term and long-term planning?” or “Do you agree that different cultures value the length of time for activities?”

The measurement of communication technology quality consisted of measuring variables that reflect the service provision and characteristics of the technology system used in the organization, including tangibility, reliability, empathy, privacy and responsiveness. The questionnaire instrument was scored according to the level of opinion on a 5-level Likert scale (1 = least to 5 = most). The tangibility dimension of service assessed the accessibility and clarity of the technology service, for example, "You can easily access the use of communication technology in the organization" and "The communication technology devices in the organization are clearly visible." Measuring in this dimension helps to determine the ease of use and access to technology services, while the reliability dimension measures the confidence in the use and reliability of the system, such as “The organization’s communication technology provides reliable communication results” and “The data transmitted through the organization’s communication technology can be traced”. In addition, the empathy dimension focuses on the user’s understanding and use, such as “The organization’s communication technology is user-friendly” and “The organization’s communication technology system is not complicated or difficult to understand”. Meanwhile, the privacy dimension measures the level of protection of personal data, such as “The organization’s communication technology respects privacy" and "The data contained in the organization's communication technology is confidential". Finally, the responsiveness dimension assesses the organization's responsiveness and support, such as "The organization provides an organization's communication technology system that is ready to use" and "The organization can promptly respond to the needs of technology users".

The measurement of cross-cultural communication performance in organizations focuses on assessing variables that reflect communication skills required in a multicultural environment, including foreign language communication skill in the organization, communication skill in the organization, and technology usage skill for communication. The instrument used is a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire (1 = least to 5 = most). In the foreign language communication skill dimension, the ability to listen, speak, read, and write in a foreign language for communication in the organization is measured. Examples of questions used in the measurement are, "You have better skills in listening and understanding foreign languages at work" and "You have better skills in speaking and understanding foreign languages at work." In addition, the communication skill in the organization dimension measures the clarity and selection of appropriate communication channels, as well as the understanding of cultural differences. Examples of questions used in the measurement are, "You can thoroughly communicate work performance information to your colleagues" and "The content of your messages is clear." Finally, the technology usage skill for communication dimension assesses the ability to use and adapt to communication technologies in the organization. Examples of measurement sentences include "You can solve problems when communication technology is problematic" and "You learn and adapt when using communication technology."

The questionnaire was statistically tested for quality and has high reliability. The Cronbach's Alpha value is more than 0.70, which is a generally accepted standard for measuring the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The data collection was conducted within the specified time frame and the questionnaires were delivered to the factory employees through appropriate channels, making the data collection comprehensive and to the point. The collected data will help the researcher analyze the employees' skills and adaptations in cross-cultural communication and the use of technology in collaboration. The analysis of the obtained data used the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique, which is a popular tool for path analysis and structural impact analysis in large data. This program can process data quickly and accurately, suitable for testing hypotheses and analyzing the relationship between independent variables, dependent variables, and variables that act as mediators.

RESULTS

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Personal Information	List	Person (s)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	168	42.0
	Female	232	58.0
Age	Below 20 years old	10	2.5
	Between 21 – 30 years old	162	40.5
	Between 31 - 40 years old	158	39.5
	Between 41 – 50 years old	60	15.0
	Above 50 years old	10	2.5
Education	Below bachelor's degree	12	3.0
	Bachelor's degree	345	86.3
	Master's degree	39	9.8
	Above master's degree	4	1.0
Working Experience	Below 1 year	20	5.0
	Between 1 - 2 years	55	13.8
	Between 3 - 5 years	114	28.5
	Above 5 years	211	52.8

Table 1. (Cont.)

Personal Information	List	Person (s)	Percentage (%)
Position	Executive/Manager	6	1.5
	Division/ Depart Head	56	14.0
	Operational staff	338	84.5
Company Size	Below 50 persons	43	10.8
	Between 51-200 persons	190	47.5
	Above 200 persons	167	41.8

From Table 1, it was found that the respondents were more female than male (58.0% female and 42.0% male). In terms of age, most were between 21-30 years old (40.5%) and 31-40 years old (39.5%), reflecting mainly young employees. In terms of education, the majority of respondents had a bachelor's degree (86.3%) and a minority had a higher education than a bachelor's degree. The analysis of work experience found that more than half of the respondents had more than 5 years of working experience (52.8%), with the majority of respondents being operational-level employees (84.5%) and a minority being executives or department heads. The size of the companies the respondents worked for was mostly medium-sized organizations (51-200 people, 47.5%) and large organizations (more than 200 people, 41.8%), reflecting a sample group with diversity in terms of job positions and organization sizes, which can provide a complete and appropriate overview of the employee group for the research.

Analysis of Cross-culture Culture Acceptance, Communication Technology Quality, Cross-cultural Communication Performance

Table 2. Analysis of Cross-culture Culture Acceptance, Communication Technology Quality, Cross-cultural Communication Performance

Factor	Mean	S.D.	%CV	Kurtosis	Skewness
Cross-culture Culture Acceptance (CCA)					
Individualism/Collectivism (INV)	3.590	0.956	26.630	-0.289	-0.772
Long-term/Short-term Orientation (LTO)	4.192	0.730	17.414	1.701	-1.344
Masculinity/Femininity (MAS)	2.910	0.814	27.973	0.177	-0.292
Power Distance (PDI)	3.685	0.712	19.322	1.155	-0.741
Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)	3.760	0.727	19.335	-0.048	-0.583
Communication Technology Quality (TQ)					
Empathy (EMPH)	4.372	0.441	10.087	0.217	-0.660
Privacy (PERS)	4.536	0.474	10.450	0.832	-1.105
Reliability (RELI)	4.458	0.435	9.758	0.042	-0.664
Tangibility (TANG)	4.445	0.481	10.821	0.750	-0.911
Responsiveness (TECP)	4.294	0.458	10.666	-0.186	-0.365
Cross-cultural Communication Performance (ECC)					
Communication skill in the organization (C_SKL)	4.323	0.452	10.456	0.393	-0.795
Foreign language communication skill (L_SKL)	4.354	0.708	16.261	1.290	-1.208
Technology usage skill for communication (T_SKL)	4.276	0.59	13.798	-0.728	-0.411

From Table 2, it was found that the Long-term/Short-term Orientation (LTO) dimensions had the highest mean value of 4.192 and the lowest %CV of 17.414, reflecting that the respondents gave great importance to foresight and long-term goal setting. The Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI) and Power Distance (PDI) dimensions had relatively high mean values of 3.76 and 3.685, respectively, indicating openness to uncertainty and acceptance of power differences in the organization. The Masculinity/Femininity (MAS) dimension had the lowest mean value of 2.91 and the highest %CV of 27.973, indicating that the respondents tend to place lower importance on gender equality than the other dimensions. For the quality of communication technology, the Privacy (PERS) factor had the highest mean value of 4.536 and the lowest %CV of 10.450, indicating the importance that the respondents placed on protecting personal data in communication. The Reliability (RELI) and Empathy (EMPH) factors had similar means of 4.458 and 4.372, respectively, indicating the importance placed on credibility and understanding others' perspectives. For cross-cultural communication effectiveness, the organizational communication skills (C_SKL) and foreign language communication skills (L_SKL) factors had the highest mean scores of 4.323 and 4.354, respectively, reflecting that employees value these skills in working with people from diverse cultures. The technology use in communication factor (T_SKL) had a mean score of 4.276, which was also high, indicating that technology use skills are important in supporting communication in a cross-cultural environment.

Model Development, Convergent Validity and Discriminant Validity

Through model development, convergent validity is used to examine how closely the new scale is connected to other variables and other measures of the same construct, whereas discriminant validity is used to determine if measurements are not meant to be much related. All data are shown in Table 3 and 4.

Table 3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Factor	Measure	Factor Loading	t-value	rho_c	rho_a	AVE	α
Cross-culture Culture Acceptance (CCA)	INV	0.760	19.886	0.836	0.777	0.511	0.751
	LTO	0.817	28.799				
	MAS	0.526	7.900				
	PDI	0.610	10.328				
	UAI	0.813	29.444				
Communication Technology Quality (TQ)	EMPH	0.867	59.806	0.919	0.895	0.696	0.889
	PERS	0.719	22.185				
	RELI	0.858	56.259				
	TANG	0.857	51.080				
	TECP	0.861	61.717				
Cross-cultural Communication Performance (ECC)	C_SKL	0.903	94.823	0.927	0.885	0.809	0.882
	L_SKL	0.894	74.559				
	T_SKL	0.902	101.873				

From Table 3, it was found that each indicator, such as Individualism/Collectivism (INV), Long-term/Short-term Orientation (LTO), Masculinity/Femininity (MAS), Power Distance (PDI), and Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI), had Factor Loading values between 0.526 and 0.817, which indicated a wide range of relationships with the CCA factors, especially the LTO and UAI indicators, which had Factor Loading values higher than the 0.7 criterion, resulting in an AVE of 0.511 and a Cronbach's alpha (α) value of 0.751, indicating moderate reliability. For the TQ factors consisting of Empathy (EMPH), Privacy (PERS), Reliability (RELI), Tangibility (TANG), and Responsiveness (TECP), it was found that each indicator had Factor Loading values higher than the 0.7 criterion, especially EMPH, RELI, TANG, and TECP, which had Factor Loading values higher than 0.85, resulting in an AVE value. equal to 0.696 and α value equal to 0.889, which indicates high internal consistency and high reliability of the TQ factor measure. For the ECC factor, which consists of Communication skill in the organization (C_SKL), Foreign language communication skill (L_SKL), and Technology usage skill for communication (T_SKL), all indicators have Factor Loading values higher than 0.85, with an AVE value equal to 0.809 and an α value equal to 0.882, which indicates high consistency and reliability of the ECC factor. In summary, all indicators have sufficient quality to be used in testing the hypothesis because the statistical values support the reliability and validity of the model.

Table 4. Discriminant validity by Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Variables	CCA	TQ	ECC
Cross-culture Culture Acceptance (CCA)	**0.715**		
Communication Technology Quality (TQ)	0.262	**0.900**	
Cross-cultural Communication Performance (ECC)	0.316	0.752	**0.834**

The bold number in the diagonal line is the square root of AVE

From Table 4, it shows the discriminant validity analysis using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, which is used to measure the differences between the main variables: Cross-culture Culture Acceptance (CCA), Communication Technology Quality (TQ), and Cross-cultural Communication Performance (ECC). The discriminant validity is measured by the square root mean of the AVE (diagonal figure). The square root mean of the AVE for CCA, TQ, and ECC are 0.715, 0.900, and 0.834, respectively, which are higher than the correlation values between other related variables, such as the correlation between CCA and TQ of 0.262 and between TQ and ECC of 0.752, indicating that each variable has clear differences and can be distinguished from each other. This difference confirms that these variables have high discriminant validity, which is an important indicator to assess the reliability of the analytical model.

Finalized Model and Hypothesis Analysis

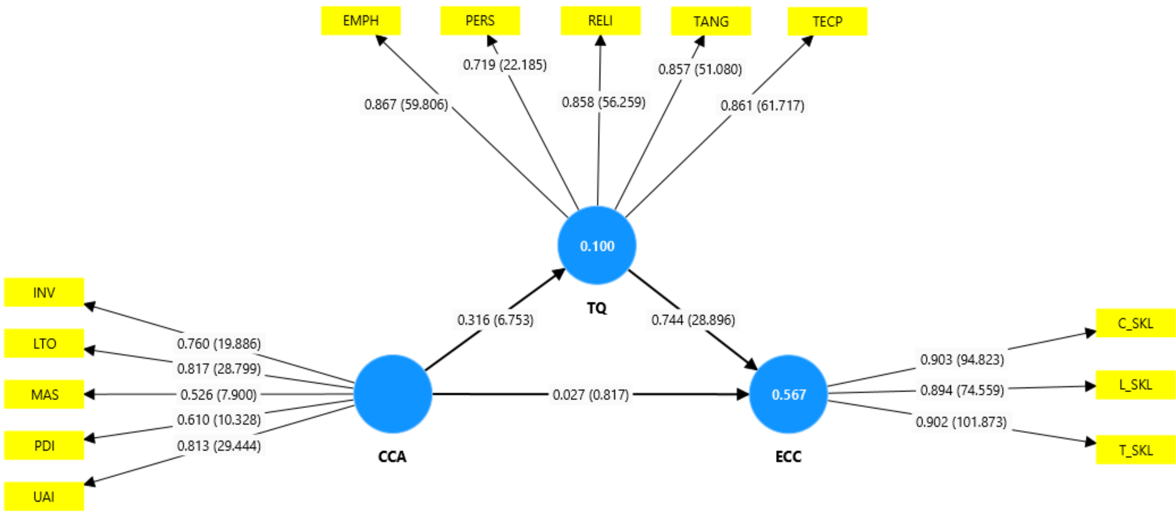


Figure 2. Finalized Model
Note: CCA, Cross-culture Culture Acceptance; TQ, Communication Technology Quality; ECC, Cross-cultural Communication Performance

Table 5. Hypothesis Analysis

Hypothesis	Standardized Estimates	t-value	*p*-values	Result
H1: CCA -> ECC	0.027	0.817	0.414	Reject
H2: CCA -> TQ	0.316	6.753	0.000	Accept
H3: TQ -> ECC	0.744	28.896	0.000	Accept
H4: CCA -> TQ -> ECC	0.235	6.286	0.000	Accept

Note: CCA, Cross-culture Culture Acceptance; TQ, Communication Technology Quality; ECC, Cross-cultural Communication Performance

From Table 5, it was found that the hypothesis H1 that stated that cross-cultural acceptance (CCA) affects cross-cultural communication effectiveness (ECC) was rejected because the t-value was equal to 0.817 and the P-value was equal to 0.414, which were higher than the specified significance level. However, the hypothesis H2 was accepted with a t-value of 6.753 and a *p*-value lower than 0.001, indicating that CCA has a positive and significant effect on communication technology quality (TQ). Similarly, the hypothesis H3 that stated TQ affects ECC was accepted with a t-value as high as 28.896, indicating a significantly positive relationship. In addition, the hypothesis H4 that stated TQ acted as a mediator between CCA and ECC was also accepted with a t-value of 6.286 and a *p*-value lower than 0.001. These results concluded that although CCA did not directly affect ECC, when TQ acted as a mediator, it would have a positive effect and enhance cross-cultural communication effectiveness.

Table 6. Direct Effect, Indirect Effect, Total Effect

Variables	TQ			ECC		
	Direct	Indirect	Total	Direct	Indirect	Total
CCA	0.316***	-	0.316***	0.027	0.235***	0.267***
TQ				0.744***	-	0.744***

Note: CCA, Cross-culture Culture Acceptance; TQ, Communication Technology Quality; ECC, Cross-cultural Communication Performance

From Table 6, it was found that CCA had a direct influence on TQ of 0.316, which was significant at the 0.001 level. The total influence between CCA and TQ was 0.316, indicating a positive and significant relationship between these two variables. However, CCA had a very small direct influence on ECC (0.027) and was not significant. On the other hand, CCA had an indirect influence on ECC through the TQ variable with a value of 0.235, which was significant, and increased the total influence between CCA and ECC to 0.267. This indicates that TQ plays an important mediating role in transmitting the influence from CCA to ECC. TQ itself had a direct influence on ECC of 0.744, which was the highest and most significant, indicating the importance of the quality of communication technology to cross-cultural communication effectiveness. In conclusion, TQ is an important variable linking between cross-cultural acceptance and cross-cultural communication effectiveness.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Studies on the effects of cross-cultural communication and the quality of communication technology on communication effectiveness suggest that accepting cultural diversity may not directly affect communication effectiveness in culturally diverse organizations. However, further studies indicate that important contextual factors, such as the quality of communication technology used in organizations, play an important role in mediating the relationship between cross-cultural acceptance and communication effectiveness. Hofstede's (2011) research, which describes various cultural dimensions such as power distance and individualism, found that these differences affect communication behavior and adaptation in organizations (Ghosh, 2011). Although accepting cultural diversity can help create a climate that supports communication within organizations, Wei's (2024) study found that accepting these differences may not directly affect communication effectiveness, but other supporting factors such as cultural intelligence and effective technology are needed to help employees understand and communicate with others in the organization from different cultural backgrounds (Wang & Goh, 2020). In addition, research shows the importance of developing high-quality communication technology in organizations to enable employees of different cultures to communicate and adapt better. The use of high-quality technology with adequate features can help facilitate clear communication and reduce the chances of misunderstandings. Fadilah and Handrianto's (2023) research suggest that the quality of technology plays a key role in increasing trust and reducing the complexity of using technology in communication. In this regard, organizations should have easily visible and accessible help systems or devices, such as helpdesks, that respond to user needs quickly and efficiently (Froehle & Roth, 2004). The study of Roses et al. (2009) also emphasizes the importance of trust in communication technologies, as the ability to trace data and accuracy of information builds trust in the system and promotes communication efficiency in an organization. Finally, the quality of technology also plays an important role in the link between cross-cultural acceptance and communication efficiency. Research has found that the availability and efficiency of technology can effectively reduce the challenges of cultural differences and enhance employee adaptation (Fu & Hwang, 2018). Choosing technologies that support multilingual communication, or those designed to be easy to use in cross-cultural contexts, can significantly reduce the problems caused by cultural diversity. Solodkova and Ismagilova's (2016) research emphasizes flexible learning environments that can adapt to the needs of users from different cultures, allowing employees to learn new skills and adapt to technology appropriately. This technology enables employees from diverse cultural backgrounds to communicate effectively in an organizational context.

For practical implications, this study shows that to enhance cross-cultural communication in organizations, especially in highly culturally diverse contexts, investing in quality communication technologies that can meet the diverse needs of employees is an important factor. Organizations should consider adopting accessible and convenient technologies, such as user support systems and instant help channels in case of problems. These technologies should be designed to support multilingual communication, which will help narrow the cultural gap and reduce the chances of misunderstandings between employees from different cultural backgrounds. In addition, training to develop cultural understanding should be part of organizational development. Organizations can consider providing training to develop cultural intelligence and the ability to adapt to communication technologies in a cross-cultural context to reduce conflict and create a strong and collaborative work environment. Creating a skill development plan for using technology together with promoting cross-cultural understanding and acceptance in the organization will help employees communicate effectively and better meet the needs of customers from diverse backgrounds.

For academic implications, this study expands the scope of knowledge on organizational culture management, especially by using Hofstede's theory to analyze the relationship between cross-cultural acceptance, the quality of communication technology, and cross-cultural communication effectiveness. The finding that communication technology plays an important mediating variable in the relationship between cross-cultural acceptance and cross-cultural communication effectiveness allows us to see the importance of investing in technologies that can reduce the complexity of cultural issues within organizations. This research also supports the idea that the quality of communication technology plays a role in enhancing cooperation and reducing conflicts among employees from different cultures, which is consistent with the ideas from the work of Cam and Minakova (2022) and Fu and Hwang (2018) who stated that technology can be an important tool in creating communication effectiveness in culturally diverse organizations. In addition, this study can provide opportunities for researchers to further study the development of technology management strategies to support communication in cross-cultural contexts and develop new dimensions in evaluating the quality of communication technology in organizations.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES

This study has limitations that should be considered in interpreting the results and applying them. One of the main limitations is that the data were collected in the specific context of the smart electronics manufacturing industry, which has a group of employees from various cultures. Therefore, the results may not be able to comprehensively reflect organizations in other industries with different work styles or technology use. In addition, the measurement of cross-culture culture acceptance and communication technology quality used a questionnaire and a Likert scale assessment, which may lead to bias in the respondents' responses because the respondents' personal perceptions may affect the assessment. In addition, the use of a questionnaire may not be able to explore the deep factors that may affect cultural acceptance and communication quality, such as emotional factors, attitudes toward different cultures, and previous work experiences. In the future, the study should be expanded to select a wider sample group, including organizations from other industries that use different forms of communication technology, such as the service, finance, and information technology industries, which will help to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the role of cross-culture acceptance and communication quality in the context of different industries. In addition, the research should consider using a mixed-method research method, including interviews or qualitative analysis, to explore in-depth perspectives on cultural acceptance and factors affecting the use of communication technology in organizations with different cultures. Experimental studies may be another method that can be used to directly study the impact of cultural acceptance training and technology use on cross-cultural communication effectiveness. Finally, future research may focus on developing new dimensions to measure the quality of communication technology that are consistent with the development of modern technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual communication, which affect the adaptation and creation of a climate friendly to cultural diversity in organizations.

CONCLUSION

This study emphasizes the important role of cultural acceptance and the quality of communication technology in enhancing the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication in organizations with employees from various cultures. The results indicate that cultural acceptance alone may not have a direct effect on the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication, but the quality of communication technology plays an important role as a mediator between cultural acceptance and effective communication, which can reduce the chance of misunderstanding and enhance cooperation in organizations with various cultures. The significance of this research lies in the discovery of the quality of communication technology as an important mediator that supports cross-cultural communication in organizations, which expands the knowledge of organizational culture management. In addition, it emphasizes the importance of investing in developing technologies that meet the needs of culturally diverse environments. This study contributes to the understanding of cross-cultural communication management and offers guidelines for organizations to promote effective communication in diverse contexts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to express their gratitude to the individuals and organizations that have supported and facilitated the successful completion of this research. We would like to thank our colleagues for their support in terms of knowledge and useful exchange of ideas. We would like to thank the institutions that provided the opportunity to access important information sources and supported us with necessary resources, which made this study successful according to its goals.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest found in this research.

REFERENCES

AlAnezi, A., & Alansari, B. (2016). Gender differences in Hofstede's cultural dimensions among a Kuwaiti sample. *European Psychiatry, 33*(S1), S503-S504. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eurpsy.2016.01.1853

Altaf, A. (2011). The impact of organizational culture on organizational effectiveness: Implication of Hofstede cultural model as organizational effectiveness model. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences, 6*(1), 161.

Aneas, M. A., & Sandín, M. P. (2009, January). Intercultural and cross-cultural communication research: Some reflections about culture and qualitative methods. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 10*(1). https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-10.1.1251

Brett, J., Behfar, K., & Kern, M. (2020). *Managing multicultural teams*. In Organizational Collaboration (pp. 155-164). Routledge.

Cam, M. F., & Minakova, L. (2022). Intercultural communications training and its role in the formation of cross-cultural competence of foreign language learners. *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 476*, 208-219. http://dx.doi.org/10.17223/15617793/476/23

Danso, R. (2018). Cultural competence and cultural humility: A critical reflection on key cultural diversity concepts. *Journal of Social Work, 18*(4), 410-430. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468017316654341

Fadilah, M. R., & Handrianto, Y. (2023). Analysis of Employee Satisfaction with Helpdesk Websites using Service Quality in Construction Companies. *Information Technology and Systems, 1*(1), 12-25. https://doi.org/10.58777/its.v1i1.91

Fatehi, K., Priestley, J. L., & Taasoobshirazi, G. (2020). The expanded view of individualism and collectivism: One, two, or four dimensions?. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management, 20*(1), 7-24. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470595820913077

Froehle, C. M., & Roth, A. V. (2004). New measurement scales for evaluating perceptions of the technology-mediated customer service experience. *Journal of operations management, 22*(1), 1-21. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jom.2003.12.004

Fu, Q. K., & Hwang, G. J. (2018). Trends in mobile technology-supported collaborative learning: A systematic review of journal publications from 2007 to 2016. *Computers & Education, 119*, 129-143. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2018.01.004

Ghosh, A. (2011). Power distance in organizational contexts: A review of collectivist cultures. *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations, 46*(3), 89–101.

Gilleard, J., & Gilleard, J. (2002). Developing Cross-Cultural Communication Skills. *Journal of Professional Issues in Engineering Education and Practice, 128(*4), 187-200. https://doi.org/10.1061/(ASCE)1052-3928(2002)128:4(187)

Gupta, A., & Chen, I. (1995). Service quality: implications for management development. *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management, 12*(7), 28-35.

Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing cultures: The Hofstede model in context. *Online readings in psychology and culture, 2*(1), 8. https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1014

Kim, E. H., Park, Y. S., & Nam, K. O. (2011). An Analysis of the SaaS Quality Impact on the Service Performance and Loyalty. *Journal of Information Technology Services, 10*(3), 127-147. https://doi.org/10.9716/KITS.2011.10.3.127

Masterson, M. (2020). An Exploration of the Potential Role of Digital Technologies for Promoting Learning in Foreign Language Classrooms: Lessons for a Pandemic. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning, 15*(14), 83-96. https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v15i14.13297

Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1985). A conceptual model of service quality and its implications for future research. *Journal of marketing, 49*(4), 41-50. https://doi.org/10.2307/1251430

Park, J. G., Lee, S., & Lee, J. (2014). Communication effectiveness on IT service relationship quality. *Industrial Management & Data Systems, 114*(2), 321-336. https://doi.org/10.1108/IMDS-04-2013-0186

Presbitero, A. (2020). Foreign language skill, anxiety, cultural intelligence and individual task performance in global virtual teams: A cognitive perspective. *Journal of International Management, 26*(2), 100729. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intman.2019.100729

Rahmawati, Y. (2023). Assessing cross-cultural understanding and intercultural communication skills in EFL classrooms: Challenges, best practices, and perceptions. *NextGen Education Review Journal, 1*(2), 22-32. https://doi.org/10.58660/nextgen.v1i2.37

Reichl, P. (2007, September). From 'Quality-of-Service'and 'Quality-of-Design'to 'Quality-of-Experience': A holistic view on future interactive telecommunication services. In *2007 15th International Conference on Software, Telecommunications and Computer Networks* (pp. 1-6). IEEE.

Roses, L. K., Hoppen, N., & Henrique, J. L. (2009). Management of perceptions of information technology service quality. *Journal of Business Research, 62*(9), 876-882. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2008.10.005

Solodkova, I. M., & Ismagilova, L. R. (2016). Acquisition of Socio-Cultural Competence via Dynamic Learning Environment. In *The European Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences* (pp.389-395). Kazan Federal University, Russia. http://dx.doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2016.07.62

Sunny, S., Patrick, L., & Rob, L. (2019). Impact of cultural values on technology acceptance and technology readiness. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 77*, 89-96. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2018.06.017

Szkudlarek, B., Osland, J. S., Nardon, L., & Zander, L. (2020). Communication and culture in international business–Moving the field forward. *Journal of World Business, 55*(6), 101126. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2020.101126

Van Laar, E., Van Deursen, A. J., Van Dijk, J. A., & De Haan, J. (2020). Determinants of 21st-century skills and 21st-century digital skills for workers: A systematic literature review. *Sage Open, 10*(1), 2158244019900176. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019900176

Vargo, D., Zhu, L., Benwell, B., & Yan, Z. (2021). Digital technology use during COVID-19 pandemic: A rapid review. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies, 3*(1), 13-24. https://doi.org/10.1002/hbe2.242

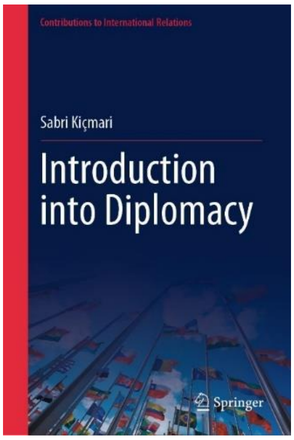
Virima, M., Sandada, M., Ndoro, T., & Chuchu, T. (2019). The impact of service quality drivers on customer satisfaction in internet provision services of Zimbabwe. *Journal of Business & Retail Management Research, 13(*3), 91–101. https://doi.org/10.24052/JBRMR/V14IS01/ART-09

Wang, K. T., & Goh, M. (2020). *Cultural intelligence*. In The Wiley Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences: Clinical, Applied, and Cross-Cultural Research (pp. 269–273).

Wei, S. (2024). Discussion of Cross-Culture Management in Cultural Diversified Workplace. *Journal of Sociology and Ethnology,* *6*(1), 164-168. https://dx.doi.org/10.23977/jsoce.2024.060122

Yalin, A. (2017). The Impact of Employees' National/Regional Culture on the Adaptation to Organizational Culture. *Management, 5*(5), 408-421. http://dx.doi.org/10.17265/2328-2185/2017.05.003

BOOK REVIEW



INTRODUCTION INTO DIPLOMACY

Reviewed by: Kittisak Wongmahesak*

Author: Sabri Kiçmari
ISBN: 9789819738977
Year: 2024
Page: 194

* Faculty of Political Science, North Bangkok University, Thailand; Research Fellow, Shinawatra University, Thailand; Adjunct Research Professor, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidenreng Rappang, Indonesia
Reviewed email: kittisak.wongmahesak@gmail.com

About the Author

His Excellency Professor Dr.Sabri Kiçmari is the Ambassador of the Republic of Kosovo to Japan and has been a prominent public intellectual in his country for many years. Before this role, he had the distinction of being the first Kosovo Ambassador to Austria (2008-2013) and Australia (2013-2018). Notably, Kiçmari is an accomplished author, having published six books, including his latest work, “History Continues – Three Models of the Continuation of History,” released by Palgrave Macmillan in 2022. He holds a Ph.D. in political science and sociology from the Institute of Political Science and Sociology and graduated from the Rheinische-Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität in Bonn, Germany.

About the Book

This book, “Introduction into Diplomacy,” by Kiçmari, is part of the “Contributions to International Relations” series. It's designed as an introductory text for students, diplomats, and anyone interested in the field. The author blends theoretical knowledge with practical experience gained over thirty years in foreign policy and diplomacy, including significant roles as an ambassador.

The book is structured into eleven chapters:

Chapter 1: of Kiçmari's “Introduction into Diplomacy” tackles the challenge of defining diplomacy, highlighting the lack of a universally agreed-upon definition. It explores interpretations from critical thinkers like Grotius, Nicolson, and Schubert, revealing the multifaceted nature of diplomacy and the differing emphasis placed on aspects such as negotiation, communication, and national interest representation. The chapter avoids a singular, rigid definition, recognizing diplomacy's adaptability to changing geopolitical contexts. Kiçmari's analysis reveals the evolution of understanding concerning diplomacy and the limitations of previous attempts at precise definition. Instead, he proposes a functional definition: diplomacy as a communicative activity focused on representing and protecting the interests of a state, nation, or its citizens. This involves extensive communication and negotiation within the international system to influence actors and achieve beneficial outcomes. The chapter underscores the dynamic and context-dependent character of diplomacy, setting the stage for a nuanced exploration throughout the rest of the book. It emphasizes the complexities of defining a practice deeply influenced by evolving global realities.

Chapter 2: "A Brief History of Diplomacy," in Kiçmari's book, argues that diplomacy's roots extend far beyond formally recorded history, emerging from early human societies' need for conflict resolution and community building. The chapter traces the evolution of diplomatic practices, highlighting the gradual development from informal mediation to formalized systems of representation and negotiation. Kiçmari notes the emergence of embassies in the 13th century and the increased importance of diplomatic envoys during the medieval period. He emphasizes the Vienna Congress of 1815 as a pivotal moment, formalizing diplomacy as a profession and establishing a system of rules and ranks for diplomats. This period saw the emergence of codified diplomatic norms and practices. The chapter culminates with a discussion of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961) and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (1963), which provide the contemporary framework for international diplomatic interactions. These conventions comprehensively codify diplomatic functions, immunities, privileges, and ranks. Chapter 2 presents a narrative of diplomacy's development, highlighting its transformation from rudimentary conflict resolution mechanisms to the sophisticated and formalized system present in modern international relations. It emphasizes the continuous evolution of diplomatic practice within a changing global landscape.

Chapter 3: "Classics of Diplomacy," profiles six influential figures who have significantly shaped the theory and practice of diplomacy. Kiçmari presents concise biographies alongside analyses of their critical contributions to the field. The chapter aims to provide a historical context for understanding contemporary diplomatic approaches. Niccolò Machiavelli's pragmatic approach, emphasizing the use of power and deception to achieve state interests, is contrasted with Hugo Grotius' emphasis on international law and the importance of ethical considerations in diplomacy. Ernest Satow's focus on practical skills and etiquette for diplomats is highlighted, while Harold Nicolson's insightful analysis of diplomatic communication and negotiation is explored. Henry Kissinger's realpolitik perspective and Geoff Berridge's emphasis on the evolving role of diplomacy in the modern era are also discussed. The chapter doesn't present these figures as representing a unified school of thought but as offering diverse and sometimes contrasting perspectives on diplomacy's core principles and methods. By examining their ideas, Kiçmari gives readers a rich understanding of the historical evolution of diplomatic theory and practice and how these past perspectives continue to inform modern approaches. The chapter serves as a foundation for further exploration of the complexities and challenges inherent in international relations.

Chapter 4: "Theories of International Relations," provides an overview of major theoretical perspectives that inform the understanding of diplomacy. Kiçmari focuses on four critical paradigms: realism, liberalism, neoliberal institutionalism, and constructivism. While acknowledging the existence of other approaches, the chapter prioritizes these four due to their significant influence on the study of international affairs and, consequently, on diplomacy. The chapter summarizes the core tenets of each theory, highlighting key differences and similarities. Realism, emphasizing state power and self-interest, is contrasted with liberalism's focus on cooperation, international institutions, and the promotion of shared values. Neoliberal institutionalism builds upon liberal ideas, emphasizing the role of international institutions in mitigating conflict and facilitating cooperation. Constructivism, in contrast, emphasizes the role of ideas, norms, and identities in shaping state behavior and international relations. The chapter does not delve into a detailed analysis of each theory but briefly introduces its fundamental concepts and critical proponents. This overview provides a background for understanding how differing theoretical lenses shape interpretations of diplomatic actions and outcomes. It underscores the importance of theoretical frameworks in analyzing the complexities of international politics and diplomacy's role within that framework. The author strategically avoids deep diving into these complex theories to maintain focus on the core topic of diplomacy.

Chapter 5: "Functions of Diplomacy," outlines diplomatic actors' key roles and responsibilities, primarily drawing on the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961). Kiçmari presents a practical perspective on diplomatic activity, moving beyond theoretical frameworks to illustrate how diplomacy operates in the real world. The chapter identifies several core functions: representing the sending state in the receiving state; protecting the interests of the sending state and its citizens within the bounds of international law; negotiating with the receiving state's government; gathering information and reporting back to the sending state; and fostering positive relations between the two states. This includes cultivating economic, cultural, and scientific ties. Kiçmari emphasizes the importance of these functions in maintaining international order and facilitating peaceful cooperation. He highlights the multifaceted nature of diplomatic work, requiring diplomats to balance various interests and priorities. The chapter underscores the practical application of diplomatic principles, showing how these roles are vital for achieving a state's foreign policy objectives and managing international relations effectively. The focus remains on the practical aspects of diplomacy, grounded in the existing legal and conventional frameworks that govern international interactions.

Chapter 6: "Diplomatic Protocol," explores the rules and customs governing the conduct and interactions of diplomats. Kiçmari emphasizes protocol's role in facilitating smooth and respectful diplomatic relations, highlighting its importance in international interactions. The chapter details the precedence system among diplomatic representatives, emphasizing that protocol reflects the principle of equal respect among states regardless of size, history, or political system. The author explains how protocol dictates the order of precedence based on the chronology of accreditation, detailing the ranking system for ambassadors and other diplomatic personnel. Beyond the formal order of precedence, the chapter also delves into the etiquette expected of diplomats in various settings, from formal meetings to social events. It examines the importance of appropriate behavior, respectful communication, and avoiding actions that could damage relations. Kiçmari further discusses situations requiring protocol intervention, such as scandals involving diplomatic personnel or the declaration of persona non grata. The chapter uses examples from various countries, including the USA, UK, Japan, Germany, Australia, France, China, and Kosovo, to illustrate the practical application of protocol in diverse diplomatic contexts. The aim is to demonstrate the role of protocol in maintaining decorum, facilitating effective diplomatic communication, preventing misunderstandings, and fostering mutual respect in international interactions.

Chapter 7: "Diplomacy and Language," examines the crucial role of language in diplomatic interactions. Kiçmari highlights language's importance as a tool for communication and negotiation in international relations, tracing its historical evolution in diplomacy. He notes the dominance of the French in diplomacy during the 17th and 18th centuries, followed by the rise of the English alongside the French, and eventually, the English's near-universal dominance in the latter half of the 20th century. The chapter discusses the impact of language rivalry, particularly the competition between French and English during the 20th century. This competition highlights the power dynamics inherent in language selection and its influence on diplomatic discourse. Kiçmari acknowledges the importance of multilingualism in modern diplomacy, recognizing that many international organizations utilize multiple languages. However, he underscores the persistent dominance of English in many international settings, particularly within international organizations and negotiations. The chapter argues that despite increasing multilingualism, English's widespread use significantly influences the dynamics of international communication, potentially creating challenges for non-native English speakers. It emphasizes the importance for diplomats to master multiple languages but also acknowledges the continuing significance of English in shaping the landscape of international communication and negotiation.

Chapter 8: "Public Diplomacy," explores the evolving role of public communication in international relations. Kiçmari highlights the significant impact of media developments over the past two decades, particularly the rise of the internet and 24-hour news cycles, on how governments conduct diplomacy. He argues that the increased accessibility of information makes it nearly impossible to conceal foreign policy actions or significant international events from the public. The chapter emphasizes that the media's pervasive reach demands a new approach to diplomacy, urging governments and diplomats to engage in public diplomacy actively. This involves crafting and disseminating messages to foreign publics to shape perceptions and influence opinions about a state's policies and actions. Kiçmari discusses the challenges and opportunities this shift presents, including the need for transparency and responsiveness to public opinion, alongside the risks of miscommunication and manipulation. The increased power of media organizations such as CNN, BBC, and DW, as well as the spread of social media, is highlighted as a critical factor driving the necessity of public diplomacy. The chapter underscores that effective public diplomacy requires a strategic approach to communication, aligning public messaging with diplomatic actions to maintain credibility and foster international understanding. It effectively argues that public diplomacy is no longer optional but a crucial element of modern international relations.

Chapter 9: “Sociology of Diplomacy,” advocates establishing a distinct sociological subfield dedicated to studying diplomacy. Kiçmari argues that while diplomacy is often addressed within the broader context of political sociology, it deserves specialized sociological analysis. He emphasizes the need for a more focused examination of diplomacy's social aspects. The chapter highlights the lack of a dedicated “sociology of diplomacy,” suggesting that this omission hinders a complete understanding of diplomatic practice's social processes and dynamics. Kiçmari asserts that a distinct sociological approach would allow for more detailed and nuanced research into diplomatic behavior, interactions, and the social construction of international relations. He proposes that this new field employ various research methods, including empirical studies, to analyze diplomatic practices, communication patterns, and the social influences shaping diplomatic actions. According to Kiçmari, the ultimate aim is to provide a more comprehensive and robust theoretical framework for understanding diplomacy's role in shaping global affairs. The chapter calls for a more interdisciplinary and sociological lens to be applied to the study of diplomacy, ultimately enriching its research and practical understanding.

Chapter 10: “Diplomacy and Ethics,” explores the complex interplay between diplomatic practices and ethical considerations. Kiçmari argues that while states naturally pursue their self-interest in international relations, ethical principles remain essential for effective and sustainable diplomacy. He stresses that a complete disregard for ethical norms could lead to unchecked actions and potentially destabilize international order. The chapter examines the tension between a state's pursuit of its interests and the need to uphold ethical standards in its dealings with other nations. Kiçmari highlights the frequent incorporation of moral arguments and considerations into diplomatic discourse, demonstrating that ethical concerns are often integrated into diplomatic strategies and actions. He further explores the challenges of balancing national interests with the protection of human rights and promoting global peace and stability. The chapter acknowledges the potential conflicts arising from these competing priorities and emphasizes the importance of responsible decision-making in international diplomacy. It concludes by asserting that ethical considerations, while often challenging to implement, are ultimately indispensable for long-term success in international relations and maintaining peaceful global coexistence.

Chapter 11: “Characteristics of the Modern Diplomat,” discusses the qualities and skills required for success in contemporary diplomacy. Kiçmari challenges prevailing negative stereotypes of diplomats, arguing that successful diplomats are more than just skilled negotiators; they require diverse capabilities. He emphasizes the need for trust and confidence, both from their state and the receiving state. The chapter highlights the importance of solid communication skills, tact, and building rapport and trust with diverse individuals. Influential diplomats are described as possessing strong analytical skills, the ability to adapt to changing circumstances, and the capacity to navigate complex political and social landscapes. Beyond these essential skills, Kiçmari underlines the need for ethical conduct and the ability to represent one's state's interests while fostering positive relationships. Referencing Satow, the author emphasizes the necessary combination of intellectual prowess and interpersonal skills. He underscores the crucial role of cultural sensitivity and understanding in navigating international relations effectively. Ultimately, the chapter advocates for a modern understanding of the diplomat as a highly skilled and adaptable individual with a solid moral compass capable of representing their state's interests while fostering cooperation and learning in a complex and ever-changing global environment.

Review

“Introduction into Diplomacy” offers a valuable contribution to the field, successfully bridging the gap between theoretical understanding and practical application. Its strength lies in its accessible style and the author's unique perspective, combining academic rigor with firsthand experience as a seasoned diplomat.

Academic Significance: The book provides a comprehensive overview of major theories in international relations, placing them within the context of diplomatic practice. This integrated approach is valuable for students seeking a deeper understanding of how theoretical frameworks translate into real-world diplomatic actions. The exploration of diverse perspectives on defining diplomacy highlights the subject's complexity and avoids oversimplification. Including historical context and biographical sketches of key figures enriches the academic value of the work, providing a broader perspective on the evolution of diplomatic thought and practice.

Professional Relevance: Kiçmari's extensive diplomatic experience shines through, providing valuable insights into the practical realities of the profession. The discussions of diplomatic protocol, public diplomacy, and the ethical dimensions of diplomacy are particularly relevant for aspiring and practicing diplomats. The book offers a pragmatic understanding of the challenges and rewards of a diplomacy career, illuminating the work's multifaceted nature beyond the stereotypical image. The detailed analysis of the functions of diplomacy offers practical guidance and context for those navigating the complexities of international relations.

Strengths:

1) Accessible Style: The book is written clearly and engaging, making it accessible to a wide audience, not just specialists.

2) Integrated Approach: It integrates theoretical and practical perspectives, providing a nuanced understanding of diplomacy.

3) Unique Perspective: The author's personal experiences bring authenticity and real-world relevance to the discussion.

4) Comprehensive Coverage: The book covers a wide range of topics related to diplomacy, providing a holistic understanding of the subject.

Potential Limitations:

1) Limited Depth: While comprehensive in its coverage, some areas may benefit from more in-depth analysis. The brevity of certain sections might leave some readers wanting more detailed explanations of complex theories or historical events.

2) Eurocentric Bias: While the book touches upon diverse contexts, a more explicitly global perspective might enhance its reach and impact.

In summary, "Introduction into Diplomacy" is essential for those studying international relations and future diplomats. The book's clear style, holistic perspective, and personal reflections make it a must-read for anyone wanting a thorough and captivating introduction to the diverse realm of diplomacy. It is a superb launchpad for deeper investigation into this intricate and intriguing area.