

The Marketing Communication Automation: Their Impact on Brand Equity Through Consumer Experience: A Case Study of Gen Z Consumers

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Abstract

As digital natives, Gen Z consumers are highly familiar with automated communication marketing tools such as chatbots, email automation, interactive voice response (IVR), and personalized advertisements. This study examines the impact of marketing communication automation on brand equity through the lens of consumer experience, focusing on Generation Z (Gen Z) consumers in Thailand. Using a quantitative research approach, data were collected from 432 Gen Z respondents aged 18–28 through an online questionnaire. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to analyze the relationships between marketing communication automation, consumer experience, and brand equity. The results indicate that the proposed model demonstrates a good fit with the empirical data (Chi-square = 25.744, $p = .421$, Chi-square/df = 1.030, GFI = .932, AGFI = .877, RMSEA = .020). The findings reveal that marketing communication automation has a significant positive effect on consumer experience, which in turn significantly enhances brand equity, confirming the mediating role of consumer experience. The findings provide empirical support suggesting that, within the Thai context, the integration of marketing communication automation could be a relevant strategic consideration for businesses targeting Gen Z consumers.

Keywords: Marketing Communication Automation, Brand Equity, Consumer Experience, Generation Z.

Introduction

In recent years, information technology has advanced rapidly, particularly in the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which has been widely adopted and has become a standard tool for marketers to achieve various objectives. One important application of AI in marketing communication is marketing communication automation, which enables automated interactions between firms and customers. For example, chatbots are commonly used to autonomously handle basic customer inquiries in both

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sales and service processes, allowing human resources to focus on more complex and value-added tasks (Kotler et al., 2023).

The integration of technology into marketing operations takes various forms, with marketing communication automation being one of the most widely used tools for consumer communication. This technology plays a crucial role in organizational success by enabling firms to manage customer interactions more efficiently and effectively (Gibbons, 2025). According to Boozary et al. (2024), marketing communication automation allows businesses to maintain continuous and targeted communication with customers. Moreover, it enhances the online shopping experience by delivering timely and relevant responses through personalized content, product recommendations, and exclusive discounts. Similarly, Gavrilă et al. (2023) found that the automation of marketing-related processes provides significant benefits for businesses, particularly by supporting investments aimed at improving consumer satisfaction.

Despite its advantages, automated marketing communication also presents challenges related to maintaining a human touch in interactions, ensuring data privacy, and avoiding excessive consumer disturbance. Consumer experiences with automated communication can vary depending on the type of technology employed and the manner in which information is delivered (Rust & Huang, 2014). When automated communication is not designed in alignment with consumer expectations, it may lead to negative experiences, which can adversely affect brand image and weaken long-term brand loyalty (Homburg et al., 2015). These issues highlight the importance of customer experience as a key factor in determining whether marketing communication automation generates positive or negative outcomes for brands.

Marketing communication automation can enhance customer experience by providing timely, consistent, and personalized interactions across multiple customer touchpoints. Such positive experiences contribute to favorable consumer perceptions, strengthen emotional connections with the brand, and ultimately support the development of brand equity. In this regard, customer experience serves as an important mechanism through which marketing communication automation can influence long-term brand value.

Beresford Research (2025) defines Generation Z (Gen Z) as individuals born between 1997 and 2012. According to Kotler et al. (2023), Gen Z consumers are highly familiar with digital technology and are among the first consumer groups to experience marketing communication automation. This generation represents a particularly important market segment, as Gen Z consumers are expected to become a high-purchasing-power group in the near future.

Although marketing communication automation has been widely adopted in many countries, its implementation in Thailand remains relatively limited, despite showing continuous growth. Several factors contribute to this slower adoption, including

limited knowledge and expertise, a strong preference for relationship-based marketing, and the high value Thai consumers place on personal engagement compared to consumers in Western markets. In addition, concerns related to implementation costs and system complexity further constrain adoption (Ourgreenfish, 2025).

Although previous studies have examined marketing communication and customer experience, empirical research specifically investigating marketing communication automation and its impact on brand equity through customer experience remains limited. In particular, there is a lack of empirical evidence validating the mediating role of customer experience in explaining how marketing communication automation contributes to brand equity. Moreover, existing studies have predominantly focused on Western contexts, while research in emerging markets such as Thailand remains scarce. Addressing this gap, the present study aims to examine the relationships between marketing communication automation, customer experience, and brand equity among Gen Z consumers within the Thai context. The findings are expected to enhance marketers' understanding of how marketing communication automation can be strategically utilized to improve customer experience and strengthen brand equity.

Objective

1. To study the influence of marketing communication automation on customer experience.
2. To study the influence of marketing communication automation on customer experience through brand equity.

Literature review

Marketing Communication Automation

Cybellium (2024) defines marketing automation as "the use of technology platforms and software designed to perform repetitive marketing tasks, streamline complex marketing processes, and ultimately improve efficiency and effectiveness in running marketing campaigns." The key marketing automation tools for communication include chatbots, email, interactive voice response (IVR), and personalized ads (Gabric, 2023; Sean, 2026; Moyer, 2023).

Chatbot

Crowder and Carbone (2023) explain that a chatbot is a software application intended to conduct online conversations, either textually or with text-to-speech capabilities that simulate human conversations and are used to provide some service (even if that service is entertainment) to the user. Chatbots are designed to engage in personalized conversations with consumers, providing support and answering inquiries, which enhances communication experiences between businesses and customers.

Nevertheless, despite technological advancements, chatbots can still misinterpret user inputs, leading to frustration. A well-structured database is essential to optimize chatbot performance and minimize errors. (Darwish, 2024).

Email Automation

Donnelly (2025) emphasizes that automated email marketing is a highly powerful tool for customer engagement and business expansion, making it an essential asset for enhancing marketing performance. The email marketing is a vital tool in digital marketing, helping businesses enhance the effectiveness of their marketing campaigns. When used strategically, it can engage customers, drive conversions, and strengthen brand loyalty. However, inappropriate email marketing practices—such as excessive messaging, irrelevant content, or lack of personalization—can annoy consumers and lead to dissatisfaction. (Ameer, 2024).

Interactive Voice Response (IVR)

Masjedi (2024) states that Interactive voice response (IVR) is an automated telecommunication technology that interacts with callers through voice or touch-tone input. It uses pre-recorded messages, speech recognition, and dynamic menu options to guide users to desired information or services. Interactive Voice Response (IVR) serves as the initial point of contact when customers reach out, making it a powerful tool for driving and enhancing the customer service experience. Survey findings indicate that, on average, 73% of customers form their first impression based on their interaction with IVR systems. (Masjedi, 2024)

Personalized Advertising

Charlesworth (2018) stated that personalized advertising refers to the communication of advertisements to consumers, where each consumer receives different marketing messages. Personalized advertising is sent to consumers by utilizing differences in consumer data, such as demographic information, psychographic information, behavioral information, location-based information, and content information (Rowles, 2017; Morimoto, 2017). According to the study by Kedi et al. (2024), it was found that personalized marketing can help improve sales efficiency and return on investment (ROI)

Brand Equity

Aaker (2004) stated that brand equity refers to the set of assets and liabilities associated with a brand, its name, and symbols, which either add to or subtract from the value provided by the company's products or services to customers. Customer-based brand equity, which is defined as having key components including brand image, brand loyalty, and purchase intention (Chitale & Gupta, 2010; Keller, 1993). Allen (2024) states that brand equity is important to businesses because it influences consumer behavior, such as driving purchases. If brand equity is strong, consumers will be less sensitive to price and more willing to pay a premium. Additionally, they are likely to

show greater brand loyalty, be more inclined to make repeat purchases or try new products under your brand name, and less likely to be swayed by competitors.

Consumer Experience

Kotler et al. (2021) define Customer experience as the overall perception and feeling that customers have about a brand throughout their entire journey. This includes all touchpoints from brand discovery and purchase decisions to product usage and post-purchase support. Customer experience plays a crucial role in customer loyalty and competitive advantage. Companies that deliver a positive and seamless experience are more likely to retain customers and generate positive word-of-mouth. Consumer experience with marketing communication includes Convenience, Accurate, and Hedonic aspects (Strycharz et al., 2019; Kyguoliene et al., 2017). However, Williams (2015) summarized that customer experience can be divided into two categories: functional experience and emotional experience.

Consumer experience is widely recognized as a multidimensional construct encompassing consumers' cognitive and affective responses that arise from interactions with products, services, and brands across various touchpoints. Prior studies suggest that consumer experience can be conceptualized through two key dimensions: functional experience and emotional experience. Functional experience refers to consumers' cognitive evaluations of the functional aspects of an offering, such as perceived usefulness, efficiency, reliability, and performance during service encounters. These evaluations influence consumers' judgments regarding the practicality and value of the service provided (Schmitt, 2010; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

In contrast, emotional experience captures consumers' affective responses generated throughout the interaction process, including feelings, moods, enjoyment, and emotional attachment toward the brand. Emotional experience plays a critical role in shaping consumers' overall perceptions and post-consumption responses, as emotional reactions often extend beyond rational assessments and influence attitudes and behavioral intentions (Schmitt, 2010). Together, functional and emotional experiences provide a holistic understanding of consumer experience, as both dimensions jointly shape consumers' evaluations of brand-related interactions and contribute to long-term relational outcomes such as brand equity (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

Previous Research

According to Adam et al. (2020), designing a user-friendly chatbot with the ability to comprehend complex queries enhances consumer experience. Additionally, the integration of AI in chatbots improves response speed and accuracy. While Ashfaq et al. (2022) found that the use of chatbots in customer service can sometimes have negative effects, as customers feel that the responses do not meet their complex needs. This leads to frustration and a decrease in trust in the service.

Mailgun (2024) found that Email Auto Response can enhance customer experience, leading to purchases and potentially influencing brand loyalty and brand image. Similarly, the study by Nobile and Cantoni (2023) indicated that personalized email marketing has a positive impact on consumer experience and purchasing decisions.

Coskun-Setirek and Tanrikulu (2019) investigated the impact of Interactive Voice Response (IVR) systems on consumers and found that IVR contributes to a positive experience and consumer satisfaction. Furthermore, IVR positively influences brand equity by shaping a favorable brand image. However, Hacikara (2023) studied IVR systems in the healthcare sector, where patients interact with AI-powered applications, and found that consumers had negative experiences with these systems, perceiving potential health and financial risks.

Tran et al. (2021) studied personalized online advertisements on social media and found that personalized online ads can create a positive experience for consumers and have a favorable impact on brand equity, particularly in terms of brand image and brand loyalty. Sari et al. (2021) studied the perceived value of personalized online advertisements on social media and found that personalized online advertisements create a positive experience for consumers, contribute to a favorable brand image, and lead to purchase intentions.

Research Framework

From the literature review, researchers can develop a research conceptual framework as shown in Figure 1.

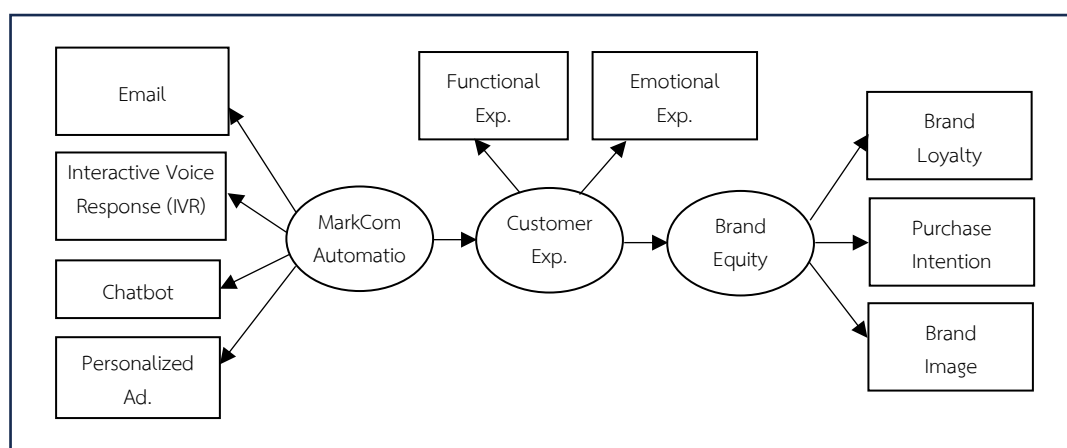


Figure 1: Research Framework

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research approach to examine the relationships among marketing communication automation, brand equity, and customer experience. Data were collected from Generation Z consumers using an online questionnaire.

In 2025, Generation Z consumers are defined as individuals aged between 13 and 28 years. However, to avoid collecting data from vulnerable groups, this study included only respondents aged 18 years and above. Consumers under 18 years old were excluded because they are less exposed to marketing communication automation and generally lack sufficient purchasing power. A screening question was included at the beginning of the questionnaire to ensure that all respondents met the selection criteria. The data collection process was conducted over a two-month period using an online survey platform. Convenience and snowball sampling techniques were applied by distributing the questionnaire through social media channels commonly used by Gen Z consumers. A total of 432 valid responses were obtained, which exceeds the minimum recommended sample size for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). According to Ho (2014), the minimum sample size should be at least 20 times the number of observed variables. As this study includes 13 observed variables, a minimum of 260 samples was required. Therefore, the final sample size of 432 respondents was considered adequate for SEM analysis.

Prior to data analysis, data pre-processing was conducted. The researcher screened the data by selecting only responses from Gen Z consumers aged between 18 and 28 years who completed all questionnaire items. Outliers were examined using standardized values, and responses exceeding the acceptable threshold were removed to ensure data quality and normality.

The quality of the questionnaire was assessed in terms of validity and reliability. Content validity was evaluated by three experts who assessed the consistency and relevance of the questionnaire items with the research objectives. The results indicated that all items had Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) scores greater than 0.5. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The results showed that the marketing communication automation construct had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.820, customer experience had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.913, and brand equity had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.841, indicating acceptable reliability for all constructs.

The measurement items for marketing communication automation were adapted from prior studies on marketing automation and digital communication systems. Customer experience items were adopted from established scales in customer experience and service marketing literature. Brand equity items were derived from well-established brand equity measurement frameworks in marketing research. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to analyze the data and test the hypothesized relationships. The statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS for preliminary analysis and AMOS for SEM analysis.

Results

Characteristics of Respondents

Out of the 432 respondents, 223 were male (51.6%), and 209 were female (48.4%). The age distribution was as follows: 192 participants (44.4%) were between 18 and 21 years old, while 240 participants (55.6%) were between 22 and 28 years old. Regarding educational attainment, 78 respondents (18.1%) had below a bachelor's degree, 286 respondents (66.2%) held a bachelor's degree or an equivalent qualification, and 68 respondents (15.7%) had a master's degree. (Table 1)

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents

Sample group	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	223	51.6
Female	209	48.4
Total	432	100
Age (Gen Z)		
18-21 years	192	44.4
22-28 years	240	55.6
Total	432	100
Education		
Below bachelor's degree	78	18.1
Bachelor's degree (or equivalent)	286	66.2
Master's degree	68	15.7
Doctoral degree	0	0
Total	432	100

The Measurement Model Testing

The measurement model test for Marketing Communication Automation (MktCom Automation), which consists of Email Automation (Email), Interactive Voice Response (IVR), Chatbot, and Personalized Advertising, was conducted to assess the adequacy of the construct. Each component was measured using a single-item indicator designed to capture the frequency of receiving marketing communication automation.

The data analysis revealed that all factor loadings were positive and statistically significant, with significance values (Sig.) of less than 0.05. Regarding the model fit, the results demonstrated an excellent fit to the empirical data, with $P = 0.871$, $CMIN/DF = 0.138$, $GFI = 0.998$, $AGFI = 0.990$ (exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.90), and $RMSEA = 0.000$ (below the recommended cutoff of 0.05).

In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of 0.68 exceeded the suggested minimum criterion of 0.50, indicating adequate convergent validity. The Composite

Reliability (CR) value was 0.73, which surpassed the recommended threshold of 0.70, demonstrating acceptable internal consistency reliability of the construct. Overall, the results indicated that all constructs demonstrated adequate convergent validity and composite reliability. Therefore, it can be concluded that the measurement model of Marketing Communication Automation is appropriate and suitable for further analysis, as illustrated in Figure 2.

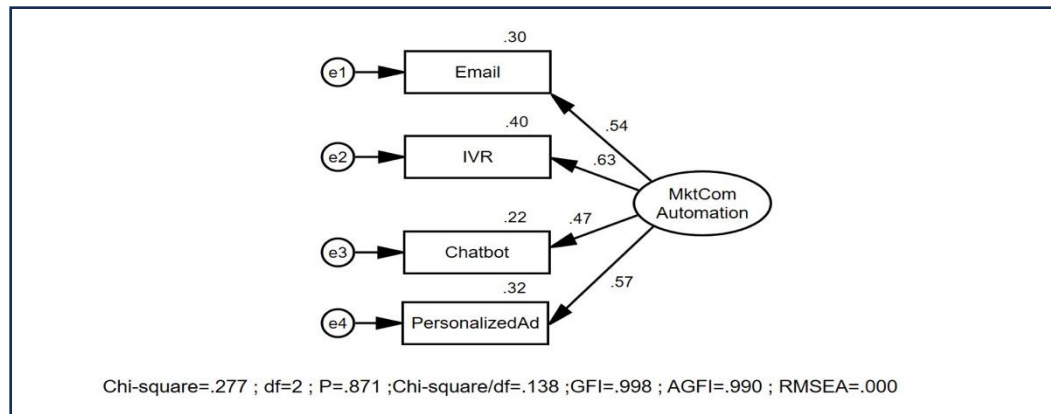


Figure 2: Measurement Model of Marketing Communication

Based on a literature review, Customer Experience consists of Functional Experience and Emotional Experience, with three items used to measure each component. The data analysis revealed that all measurement items had factor loadings greater than 0, with significance values of less than 0.05. The fit indices indicated a good model fit ($P = 0.454$, $CMIN/DF = 0.966$, $GFI = 0.912$, and $RMSEA = 0.000$).

In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were 0.669 for Functional Experience and 0.663 for Emotional Experience, while the Composite Reliability (CR) values were 0.858 and 0.855, respectively. Overall, the results indicated that all constructs demonstrated adequate convergent validity and composite reliability, confirming that Functional Experience and Emotional Experience are components of Customer Experience, as illustrated in Figure 3.

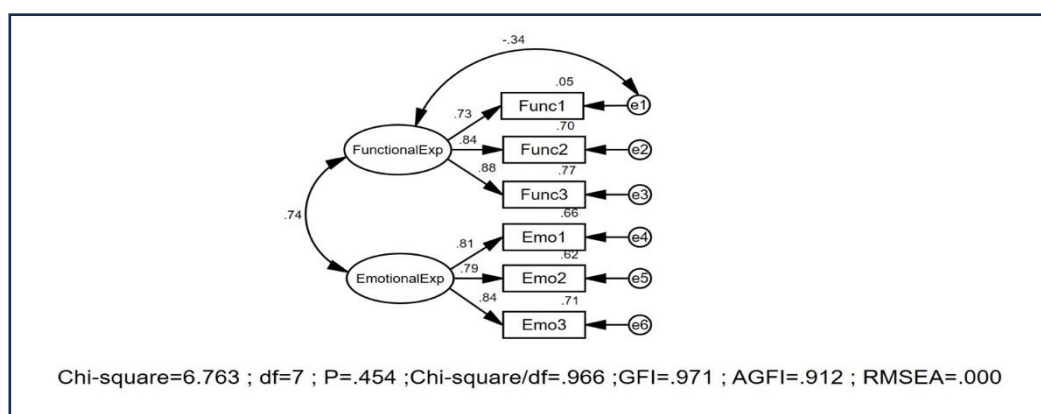


Figure 3: Measurement Model of Customer Experience

A literature review indicates that Brand Loyalty, Brand Image, and Purchase are components of Brand Equity. The researchers employed three items to measure each component. The data analysis results revealed that all measurement items had factor loadings greater than 0, with significance values of less than 0.05. The analysis of the fit indices showed an acceptable model fit ($P = 0.147$, $CMIN/DF = 1.329$, $GFI = 0.922$, and $RMSEA = 0.068$). In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were 0.545 for Brand Loyalty, 0.561 for Brand Image, and 0.623 for Purchase, while the Composite Reliability (CR) values were 0.782, 0.790, and 0.832, respectively. Overall, the results indicated that all constructs demonstrated adequate convergent validity and composite reliability, confirming that Brand Loyalty, Brand Image, and Purchase are valid components of Brand Equity, as illustrated in Figure 4.

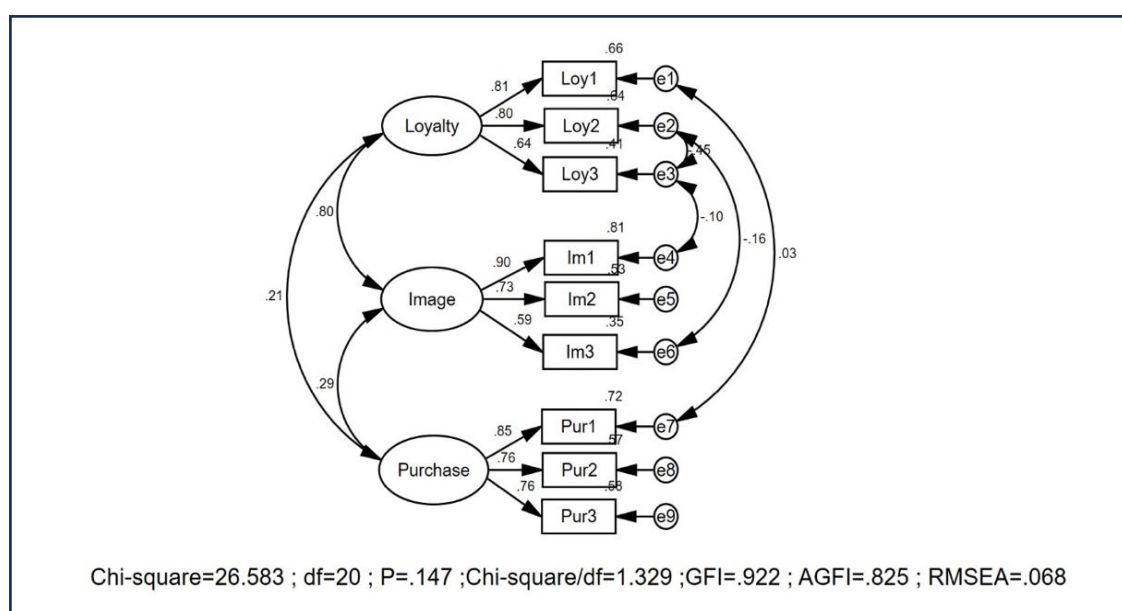


Figure 4: Measurement Model of Brand Equity

Data Analysis Results Based on Research Objectives

The research objective is to "study the influence of marketing communication automation on brand equity through customer experience." The results of the data analysis are as follows:

The results of the data analysis for testing the conceptual research framework against empirical data indicate the following fit indices: $P = 0.421$ (>0.05), $CMIN/DF = 1.030$, $GFI = 0.932$, $CFI = 0.995$, $IFI = 0.995$, and $TLI = 0.993$. Additionally, $RMSEA = 0.020$ (<0.05). Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the conceptual research framework is consistent with the empirical data. (Figure 5)

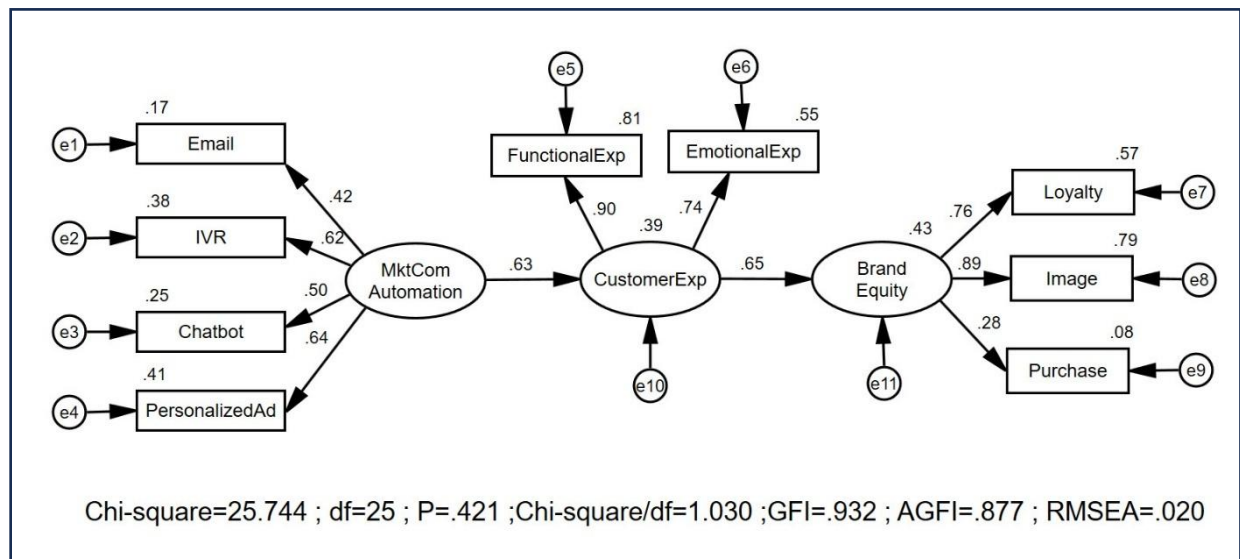


Figure 5: Full Model Testing

The analysis of the influence of Marketing Communication Automation on Customer Experience indicates that $P = 0.024$, demonstrating a statistically significant positive effect of Marketing Communication Automation on Customer Experience. The standardized regression weight was 0.627, suggesting that a one standard deviation increase in Marketing Communication Automation leads to a 0.627 standard deviation increase in Customer Experience.

Furthermore, the analysis of the influence of Customer Experience on Brand Equity shows that $P = 0.000$, confirming that Customer Experience has a significant positive impact on Brand Equity. The standardized regression weight for this relationship was 0.654, indicating that a one standard deviation increase in Customer Experience results in a 0.654 standard deviation increase in Brand Equity.

Prior to testing the structural relationships, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted for all latent variables, including Marketing Communication Automation, Customer Experience, and Brand Equity, as illustrated in Figures 2–4. The CFA results indicated that all measurement models achieved acceptable goodness-of-fit indices without any model modification, consistent with the recommendations of Hair et al. (2019). Specifically, no additional paths were added between error terms and latent variables, and no error covariances were specified to improve model fit.

A further verification confirmed that there were no modifications involving correlations between error terms and latent constructs in the CFA models presented in Figures 3 and 4. The satisfactory model fit was achieved based solely on the theoretically specified model and empirical data, thereby supporting the robustness and validity of the measurement models (Hair et al., 2019).

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that Marketing Communication Automation positively influences Brand Equity through Customer Experience. In addition,

the R-squared value of 0.428 indicates that Marketing Communication Automation and Customer Experience collectively explain 42.8% of the variance in Brand Equity.

Conclusion and Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that Marketing Communication Automation has a significant positive influence on Customer Experience among Gen Z consumers, encompassing both Functional Experience and Emotional Experience. This result can be explained by the technological familiarity of Gen Z, who are highly accustomed to digital platforms and automated communication systems. As a result, marketing communication automation serves as an effective mechanism for enhancing their overall experience with brands.

In terms of Functional Experience, marketing communication automation enhances convenience, improves the accuracy and timeliness of information delivery, and enables personalized communication that aligns with individual consumer needs. These functional benefits help reduce effort and increase efficiency in consumer-brand interactions. Simultaneously, automation also contributes to Emotional Experience by fostering positive feelings, creating a sense of comfort, and leaving favorable impressions through consistent and responsive communication. These findings are consistent with prior studies suggesting that user-friendly automation systems facilitate smoother interactions and enhance customer experience (Adam et al., 2020; Coskun-Setirek & Tanrikulu, 2019).

Moreover, the results demonstrate that Customer Experience derived from Marketing Communication Automation has a positive impact on Brand Equity, including Brand Loyalty, Brand Image, and Purchase Intention. For Gen Z consumers, who frequently interact with brands through digital and automated channels, positive experiences generated through automation strengthen emotional attachment to brands, enhance brand perceptions, and encourage repeat purchase behavior. This finding supports previous research indicating that customer experience plays a crucial role in shaping purchasing behavior, brand loyalty, and brand image (Mailgun, 2024). Overall, the results confirm the mediating role of Customer Experience in linking Marketing Communication Automation to Brand Equity.

Application of Research Findings

Although the adoption of marketing communication automation in Thailand remains relatively limited compared to Western markets, this study provides empirical evidence that such automation can effectively enhance customer experience among Gen Z consumers and, in turn, strengthen brand equity. While Thai consumers have traditionally been perceived as valuing personal interaction, the findings suggest that

Gen Z consumers respond positively to automated marketing communication when it delivers convenience, relevance, and emotional value.

Therefore, businesses targeting Gen Z consumers are encouraged to integrate marketing communication automation into their communication strategies. By strategically utilizing tools such as automated emails, chatbots, and personalized digital advertising, firms can improve customer experience, reinforce brand relationships, and enhance long-term brand equity in an increasingly digital marketplace.

Future Research

Future research can be extended in several directions.

1. Future studies may expand the scope of the sample to include consumer groups from other generations, such as Generation Y or Generation X, to enhance the generalizability of the findings.
2. Future research may consider employing probability sampling techniques to further strengthen sample representativeness and reinforce the robustness of empirical findings.
3. Further studies may focus on specific product or service categories to provide deeper insights into the role of marketing communication automation across different consumption contexts.

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