The Analysis of Bangkok Coffee Chain's Consumers and the Influence of Brand Personalities on Their Purchasing Decision

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Abstract: This research contains 2 parts. The first part explores the relationship between brand personality and consumer personality of the coffee chain's consumers in Bangkok. The second part further, explores the influence of brand personalities on purchasing decision of coffee chains' consumers in Bangkok. Aaker 5 dimensions of brand personality namely sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness was adopted as a framework for analysis. The results showed that there is a significant correlation between consumer personalities and brand personalities in all dimensions. However, competence brand personality is the only dimension that significantly influenced purchasing intention of coffee chains' consumers in Bangkok.

Key words: Brand personality, consumer personality, purchasing intention, coffee, Bangkok

INTRODUCTION

Thailand experiences dramatic growth in coffeehouse business. Many local and international coffeehouse chains have been entering and expanding rapidly after the successful entry of Starbucks Coffee in 1998. Euromonitor Intenatioal (2014) reported that change toward a more westernized lifestyle and the growth of coffee culture can be witnessed from the expansion of coffee stalls and coffee stores chains. In 2007 alone, there were 4 new foreign players, namely McCafe, Segafredo, Gloria Jean's and Caffe Ritazza entering the market to reap the benefits of the growth in coffee culture in Thailand. After that different types of coffee shops were opened including boutique coffee shops in local communities and tourist areas, local coffee shops chains such as True coffee and Cafe Amazon and street side coffee kiosks (Euromonitor Intenatioal, 2014). Owning a coffee shop is reported as the top 3 dream business for Thai (Marketeer, 2013).

In 2012, it is reported that sales of cafes/bars reached 203.4 billion Baht and increased by 4% in 2012 chained cafes/bars was the main driver of growth of the coffee industry with 9% outlet expansion and 11% current value growth in 2012 (Euromonitor Intenatioal, 2014). Starbucks coffee (Thailand) continued its leading position in chained specialist coffee shops with a 55% share of value sales. Starbucks was recognized as the very first brand creating a coffee-drinking culture in Thailand. Customers have strong loyalty to the brand and associate the brand with a modern and chic lifestyle (Bangkok Post, 2014).

There are a number of literatures indicated that brand personality can boost consumer preference and has a positive relationship with levels of consumer trust and loyalty (Wysong *et al.*, 2004; Mengxia, 2007). Moreover with loyal customers, companies will have a consistent source of revenue with less promotional cost which resulted in an increasingly of the company's overall profitability as loyal customers are less price sensitive (Reichheld, 1996), more willing to re-purchase and try the company's other products or services, more willing to recommend and bring new customers to the company and more willing to give the company a sincere feedback (Reichheld and Sasser, 1990).

Aaker's brand personality: The importance of brand personality has been emphaised by Aaker (1996, 1997, 1999). Brand personality helps enriching understanding of the brand and contributing to identity differentiation and positioning for the brand. Moreover, it helps guiding communication and helps creating brand equity.

Aaker (1997) defined brand personality traits, as a set of human characteristics associated with a brand. So when consumers consider about a particular brand, human personality traits would come to mind. The brand personality dimension was developed for the measurement of the personalities of a brand in 5 core dimensions, namely; sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness. Each dimension is divided into a set of facets. Sincerity is associated with characteristics, such as down to earth, honest, wholesome, cheerful, family-oriented, small-town, sincere,

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real, original, sentimental and friendly. Excitement is associated with characteristic, such as daring, spirited, imaginative, up-to-date, trendy, exciting, cool, young, unique, independent and contemporary. Competence is associated with characteristic such as reliable, intelligent, successful, hard-working, secure, technical, corporate, leader and confident. Sophistication is associated with characteristic, such as upper class, charming, glamorous, good looking, feminine and smooth. Ruggedness is associated with characteristic, such as outdoorsy, tough, masculine, Western and rugged.

Aaker's personality traits framework has been adopted in several marketing researches to examine the relationship between product personality and consumer's personality. It was found consumers tended to prefer products with a product personality that matched his/her own self-image. Moreover, consumers also tended to express themselves by selecting brands whose personalities are consistent with their own personalities (Aaker, 1999; Govers and Schoormans, 2005; Sirgy, 1982, 1985; Sirgy *et al.*, 1997).

A number of researchers in Thailand also adopted Aaker's personality traits to explore a connection between brand personality and consumer personality. Wongparnich (2000) for example, examined a connection between the brand personality and consumer personality of women's magazines namely Elle, Cleo and Cosmopolitan, using focus group interview with 24 target customers. The result showed a positive relationship between brand personality and the interviewees' personality. Similar research was conducted by Chittangkura (2002) on radio channels, namely; 102.5 FM Get, 103.5 FM Modern Love and 104.5 FM Fat Radio. The study also showed a positive relationship between brand personality and the interviewees' personality.

Another research was conducted by Leudjeen (2001) to explore the relationship between consumer personality, brand personality and the purchasing intention. This research has included brands with different personalities and varied in nature of products, so called high-involvement product (i.e., compact cars) and low involvement product (i.e., soft drinks). Survey method was adopted. The study found the positive relationship between consumer personality and brand personality of both high and low involvement products. There was also a positive relationship between consumer personality, brand personality and purchasing intention.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

There are 2 main hypotheses in this research. The research framework is presented in Fig. 1.

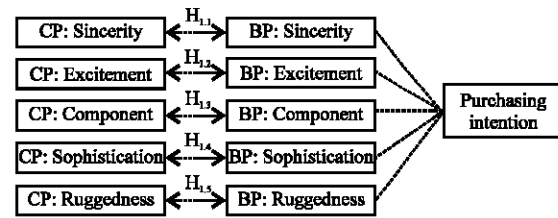H_1: There is a positive relationship between brand personality and consumer personality. Correlation

Fig. 1: Conceptual framework

Table 1: Variables' the reliability of scales

Variables	Cronbach's alpha
CP: Sincerity	0.738
CP: Excitement	0.889
CP: Competence	0.859
CP: Sophistication	0.777
CP: Ruggedness	0.739
BP: Sincerity	0.736
BP: Excitement	0.891
BP: Competence	0.922
BP: Sophistication	0.805
BP: Ruggedness	0.800
Purchasing Intention	0.835

analysis is adopted to examine the relationship between each facet of brand personalities and consumer personalities.

H_2: Brand personalities of coffee chain have influenced consumers' purchase decision. Multiple regression analysis is adopted to look at the influential characteristics that have the impact on purchasing decision of coffee chain's consumers in Bangkok.

A survey of 400 Bangkok's coffee chain consumers was conducted between January to February, 2013 in 5 department stores in Bangkok, namely Siam Paragon, Central World, Central Plaza Ladprao, Terminal 21 and the Mall Bangkapi. The sampling size of 80 was equally distributed to each department store. The respondents were approached randomly with the screen question if the respondent was a regular coffee drinker. SPSS software was used for data analysis.

The questionnaire comprises 3 parts. The 1st part contains questions related to demographic information and coffee consumption behaviors. The second part explores consumer personalities. The last part explores brand personalities of the respondents' favorite coffee chain.

In part 2 and 3, 5 level Likert scale was adopted, ranging from level 1 representing strongly disagree to level 5 representing strongly agree. Every applicable data was tested for its reliability. Conbach's Aplha Coefficient is used to determine reliability and is accepted if its value is >0.7 (Nunnally, 1978). The values of Conbach's Aplha in each part of this research ranged between 0.736-0.922 (Table 1), above common accepted standard of 0.70.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' demographic data: About 69.8% of respondents in this research are male and 30.2% female. About 85.7% of respondents are in the age range between 26-45 years old. About 70% of respondents have Bachelor's degree and majority of respondents work in private sector. About 73% of respondents are still single.

Monthly income of respondents was varied. The 33.3% of respondents reported their income range between 15,001-25,000 Baht, 20.5% in the range between 35,001-45,000 Baht, 18.0% in the range between 25,001 and 35,000 Baht and the same percentage reported the income of >45,000 Baht per month and 10.3% reported that their income below 15,000 Baht per month.

Regarding coffee consumption behaviors, the research found that 32.3% of respondents consumed coffee 1-2 times per week, 21.8% consumed coffee 3-4 times per week 18.8% consumed coffee 5-6 times per week and 27.3% consumed coffee every day.

In terms of consumers' favorite brand, 51.8% of the respondents preferred starbucks, 13.7% of respondents preferred Cafe Amazon and 7% preferred Black Canyon, followed by Au Bon Pain (4.4%), Kao Talu (4.1%) and others (19%).

From the earlier finding, it is interesting to note that over 70% of respondents who are consumers of coffee chain in Bangkok are not a daily coffee drinker. 33.3% of respondents reported their income range between 15,001-25,000 Baht and majority of respondents (73%) are single. This raises a challenge to coffee chain operators. First of all whether it is possible to push more sales to this group of customers? From consumer's perspective, buying coffee from coffee chain stores is considered not cheap (approximately 100 Baht per drink while a national minimum wage is 300 Baht per day). This occasion group of customers may find it difficult to buy coffee from coffee chain shops on a daily basis. However, coffee culture in Thailand is very much associated with modern lifestyle. Having or buying coffee from coffee-chain stores might be one way that consumer using for self-expression.

Relationship between brand personality and consumer personality: The result from Pearson's correlation analysis is showed in Table 2. The research finds that:

- There is a significant positive relationship between consumer personality and brand personality in sincerity dimension (r = 0.27 and p<0.05)

Table 2: Pearson's correlation analysis on the relationship between consumer personality and brand personality of coffee chain consumers in Bangkok

Hypothesis	Description	r	p
$H_{1.1}$	There is a significant positive relationship between consumer personality and brand personality in sincerity dimension	0.27	0.00**
$H_{1.2}$	There is a significant positive relationship between consumer personality and brand personality in excitement dimension	0.19	0.00**
$H_{1.3}$	There is a significant positive relationship between consumer personality and brand personality in competence dimension	0.17	0.00**
$H_{1.4}$	There is a significant positive relationship between consumer personality and brand personality in sophistication dimension	0.23	0.00**
$H_{1.5}$	There is a significant positive relationship between consumer personality and brand personality in ruggedness dimension	0.11	0.03*

Table 3: Multiple regression analysis on the influence of brand personalities on purchasing decision of Bangkok coffee chain's consumers

Brand personality dimensions	β	t	Sig.	R^2	Sig.
Sincerity	-0.002	-0.042	0.967	0.044	0.003**
Excitement	0.095	1.744	0.082		
Competence	0.128	2.370	0.018*		
Sophistication	-0.085	-1.625	0.105		
Ruggedness	0.080	1.548	0.122		

*,**p = 0.05 and 0.01, respectively

- There is a significant positive relationship between consumer personality and brand personality in excitement dimension (r = 0.19 and p<0.05)
- There is a significant positive relationship between consumer personality and brand personality in competence dimension (r = 0.17 and p<0.05)
- There is a significant positive relationship between consumer personality and brand personality in sophistication dimension (r = 0.23 and p < 0.05)
- There is a significant positive relationship between consumer personality and brand personality in ruggedness dimension (r = 0.11 and p<0.05)

The influence of brand personalities on purchasing decision of Bangkok coffee chain's consumers: The result from multiple regression analysis is shown in Table 3. The research finds that brand personalities have significantly influenced purchasing decision of coffee chain customers in Bangkok. However, only brand personality in the competence dimension has a positive correlation to purchasing intention (β = 0.128, t = 2.370 and p<0.05). Other personality dimensions do not significantly correlate to purchasing intention.

Findings in parts 4.2 and 4.3 which indicated that consumer personality has a significant positive correlation with brand personality and the brand personality significantly influence to purchasing decision, especially in the competence dimension provide a very interesting implication. As earlier stated, competence

brand personality facet is associated with characteristic such as reliable, intelligent, successful, hard-working, secure, technical, corporate, leader and confident. Hence, this is the areas that coffee chain operators can focus on brand enhancement. Such factors have to be re-enforced to all aspects that related to the brand. It links not only to products but also store atmosphere and staff.

This finding also helps coffee chain operators to locate their target customers. They are customer who perceived their personalities as I am reliable, I am intelligent, I am successful, I am hard-working, I am secure, I am technical, I am corporate, I am a leader and I am confident. This group of customers are not necessary a high income.

CONCLUSION

Drawn from Aaker (1997)'s 5 dimensions of brand personality namely sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness, this research explores the relationship between brand personality and consumer personality of the coffee chain's consumers in Bangkok. It further, explores the influence of brand personalities on purchasing decision of coffee chains' consumers in Bangkok. The results show that there is a significant correlation between consumer personalities and brand personalities in all dimensions. However, only competence brand personality is significantly dominated the purchasing decision of coffee chains' consumers in Bangkok.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

This research was focused on coffee's chain consumers in Bangkok. Although, the analysis has provided insight knowledge about urban consumers and coffee chains, it inevitably has the limitation on scope. Similar research shall be conducted to other types of coffee shops, i.e., SMEs non-chain standalone coffee shops and shall be explored in other areas. Other dimensions of brand personality might have impact on consumers' buying decision.

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