The Causal Factors of Sale Agent's Service Satisfaction in the Perspective of Salesperson that Affect Sales Support in the Retail IT Product Industry in Thailand

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Abstract

This research aims to study the causal factors of service satisfaction from sales representatives' perspectives that affect brand advocacy in Thailand's retail IT business. The study collected data from 400 sales representatives in the retail IT business in Thailand through purposive sampling and online questionnaires. The results revealed that the factors significantly affecting service satisfaction include company image, trust in sales representatives, and customer experience. These three factors also directly and indirectly influence brand advocacy among sales representatives. Moreover, job satisfaction plays a crucial role in linking these factors with brand advocacy. Sales representatives with higher job satisfaction are more likely to support the brand. These findings can be applied in strategic planning and policy development in human resource management and marketing in Thailand's retail IT business. Strengthening Brand Advocacy. Operators can leverage satisfied sales representatives to promote the brand. Policies should encourage repeat purchases, word-of-mouth referrals, and participation in marketing activities. This is particularly relevant in the current era, where advocates often act as reviewers or influencers, affecting purchasing decisions. Encouraging advocacy through customer. Improving Company Image A positive company image directly influences customer satisfaction, sales growth, profitability, and customer loyalty. Operators should focus on enhancing aspects such as trustworthiness, innovation, and friendliness. Policies should aim to foster credibility, modernity, creativity, and academic excellence while building positive relationships with customers through attentiveness and friendliness. Enhancing Customer Experience. Positive customer experiences significantly impact satisfaction and loyalty. Operators should create strategies that ensure seamless experiences throughout the Customer Journey, from product discovery to post-purchase interactions. This

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includes providing relevant product information, facilitating easy transactions, and resolving customer issues promptly.

Keywords: Company Image; Trust; Customer Experience; Service Satisfaction; Brand Advocacy

Introduction

In today's rapidly changing business world, Brand Advocacy has become a critical factor in maintaining a brand's strength in the market. Brand advocacy stems from the satisfaction of customers and sales representatives regarding the service provided.

This satisfaction is influenced by various external and internal factors within an organization. One key factor contributing to satisfaction is the Company Image, which reflects the perceptions of employees and customers toward the value delivered by the company. (Aaker, D. (1991). Additionally, Trust in Sales Representatives and Customer Experience play significant roles in shaping employees' satisfaction with their work, fostering a sense of value and trustworthiness in the company. (Aldás-Manzano, J., et al. (2009).

Research Objective

This research focuses on the causal factors of service satisfaction among sales representatives from their perspective, which impact brand advocacy in Thailand's retail IT business. The study has the following objectives:

To examine the influence of company image, trust in sales representatives, and customer experience on the service satisfaction of sales representatives and their brand advocacy in Thailand's retail IT business.

To analyze the causal effects of company image, trust in sales representatives, and customer experience on the service satisfaction and brand advocacy of sales representatives in Thailand's retail IT business.

To develop a causal model of service satisfaction among sales representatives, from their perspective, that affects brand advocacy in Thailand's retail IT business.

Scope of research

Content Scope

Service Satisfaction, Company Image of sales representatives, Trust in Sales Representatives refers, Customer Experience relates to the process of creating impactful

experiences for sales, Brand Advocacy represents the outcome of an organization's efforts to encourage sales representatives to deliver exceptional experiences to employees and customers. It includes behaviours such as repeat purchases, word-of-mouth referrals, and active participation.

Population Scope

The population and sample group for this study consisted of 400 sales representatives in the retail IT business in Thailand. The sampling method employed was purposive sampling, aiming to examine the causal factors of service satisfaction from the perspective of sales representatives and their impact on brand advocacy in Thailand's retail IT business.

Literature Review and Concept

Service Satisfaction from the perspective of sales representatives refers to the level of satisfaction that sales representatives feel regarding the service provided to them and their customers or buyers. This includes customers' expectations and positive attitudes toward the sales representatives. Service quality development is an important part that will help the organization grow and develop, creating a good image. (Al-Tarawneh, K. A. (2012). If the quality of service is not satisfactory, the service does not correspond to the needs, it will reflect on the quality of the cooperative management, the development of work in the organization. The service recipient will act as both an evaluator and a proposer of opinions for improving the service. This service quality is an issue that has an impact on business operations. Aagja, J. P., & Garg, R. (2010). It is an important factor that influences the decision to use the service of the customer (Anderson, C.R. & Zeithaml, C.P., (1984) by Szwarc, P.(2005).

Company Image of sales representatives, as perceived by employees, encompasses the overall outcomes of sales representatives' experiences. These include impressions, emotions, and perceptions, which consist of attributes such as capability/competence, innovation, and friendliness.

Trust in Sales Representatives refers to the willingness of employees to place specific trust in sales representatives. This trust includes components such as competence, honesty, and attentiveness.

Customer Experience relates to the process of creating impactful experiences for sales representatives with sales agents. It comprises elements such as product experience, results-oriented focus, customer interaction, and experience management during service delivery.

Brand Advocacy represents the outcome of an organization's efforts to encourage sales representatives to deliver exceptional experiences to employees and customers. Aaker, D. A., & Equity, M. B. (1991). It includes behaviors such as repeat purchases, word-of-mouth referrals, and active participation. (Ajzen, I. (1991).

Research Methodology

This research is survey research with a questionnaire as a tool that is examined by 3 experts.

The population and sample group for this study consisted of 400 sales representatives in the retail IT business in Thailand. The sampling method employed was purposive sampling, aiming to examine the causal factors of service satisfaction from the perspective of sales representatives and their impact on brand advocacy in Thailand's retail IT business.

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, it was reviewed by a panel of five experts to assess the alignment of the questions with the research objectives. The Item of Objective Congruence Index (IOC) was calculated and yielded a value of 0.91. For reliability, the researcher conducted a pilot test with 30 samples and determined the reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which resulted in a value of 0.96.

Data collection was conducted through online questionnaire distribution. The statistical methods used for data analysis included descriptive analysis, analysis of relationships between variables, and structural equation modeling (SEM).

Research results

General Information of Respondents

The majority of respondents in this study were female (56.75%). The largest age group was 31-40 years old (37.25%), and most respondents had 16-20 years of work experience (30.00%). The group with the highest monthly sales income earned more than 50,001 THB (40.00%). The majority held a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education (40.25%) and were single (57.25%).

Company Image

The analysis of perceptions regarding the Company Image revealed a high level of agreement (Mean = 4.05, S.D. = 0.64). The most prominent aspect was capability/competence (Mean = 4.11, S.D. = 0.74), followed by friendliness and innovation.

Trust in Sales Representatives

The respondents' trust in sales representatives was also rated at a high level (Mean = 4.05, S.D. = 0.69). The highest-rated dimension was attentiveness (Mean = 4.14, S.D. = 0.79), followed by honesty and competence.

Customer Experience

The analysis of Customer Experience indicated a high level (Mean = 4.07, S.D. = 0.67). The highest-rated dimension was results-oriented focus (Mean = 4.12, S.D. = 0.72), followed by customer interaction and experience management during service delivery.

Service Satisfaction

The level of Service Satisfaction was found to be high (Mean = 4.04, S.D. = 0.63). The aspects of attitudes toward sales representatives and sales representatives' expectations received equal average scores.

Brand Advocacy

Finally, the level of Brand Advocacy among sales representatives was also rated at a high level (Mean = 3.98, S.D. = 0.62). The highest-rated dimension was engagement (Mean = 4.11, S.D. = 0.68), followed by word-of-mouth referrals and repeat purchases.

The initial analysis of the structural equation model revealed that the goodness-of-fit indices did not meet the established criteria, indicating a lack of alignment with the empirical data. To address this issue, the researcher undertook a model modification process. This involved adjusting parameters and allowing correlated error terms, thereby relaxing some initial assumptions. The adjustments aimed to enhance the model's ability to fit the empirical data effectively.

Following these modifications, the revised model demonstrated significant improvements in its goodness-of-fit indices. Key statistics supporting this conclusion included a chi-square value of 49.06 with 39 degrees of freedom, yielding a χ^2/df ratio of 1.258. The p-value of 0.129 indicated that the model fit was not significantly different from the observed data. Furthermore, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) reached 1.00, while the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) and Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI) were 0.98 and 0.95, respectively. Additionally, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was 0.025, and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) was 0.022.

All these indices met the acceptable thresholds, where χ^2/df was less than 2, RMSEA and SRMR were below 0.05, and CFI, GFI, and AGFI were greater than 0.95 and close to 1.

These results confirm that the revised model is statistically robust and aligns well with the empirical data.

In conclusion, the causal model of service satisfaction, viewed from the perspective of sales representatives and its impact on brand advocacy in Thailand's retail IT business, is appropriately fitted to the empirical data. The model effectively captures the interrelationships and underlying factors influencing brand advocacy, thereby contributing valuable insights into the dynamics of satisfaction and advocacy in this industry. This alignment underscores the model's validity and reliability in explaining the studied phenomena.
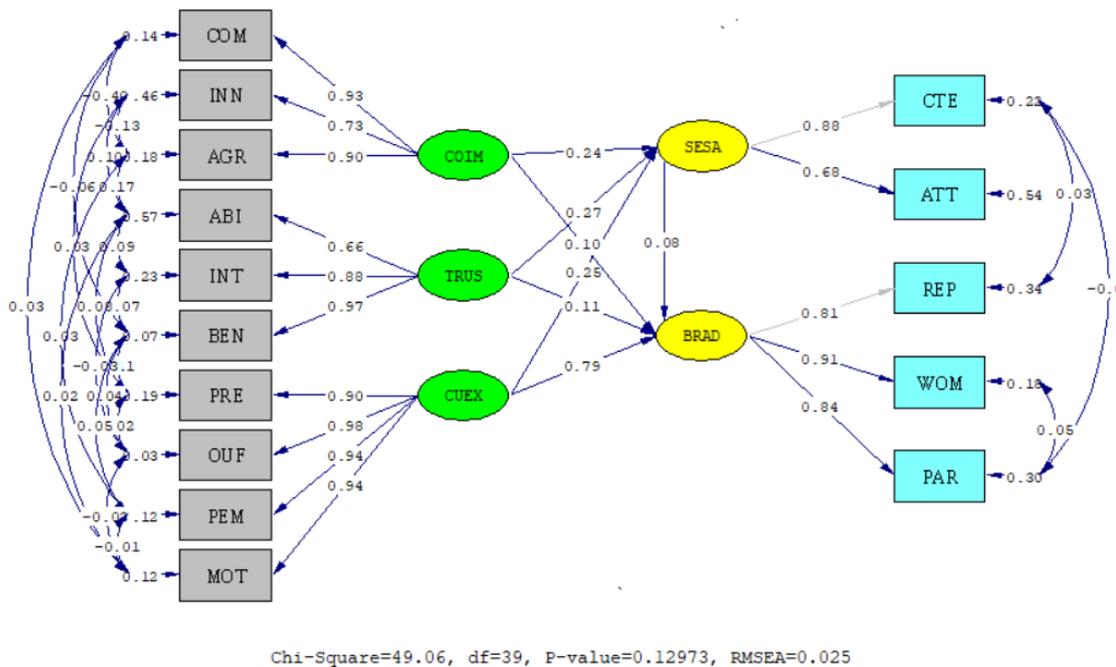

Chi-Square=49.06, df=39, P-value=0.12973, RMSEA=0.025

Figure 1: Structural Equation Model Based on Hypotheses

The path analysis highlighted significant direct and indirect effects on the key variables in this study. First, the variable Service Satisfaction (SESA) was found to be directly influenced by three factors: Company Image (COIM), Trust in Sales Representatives (TRUS), and Customer Experience (CUEX). These direct effects had effect sizes of 0.24, 0.27, and 0.25, respectively, and were all statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This underscores the importance of these factors in shaping service satisfaction among sales representatives.

In terms of Brand Advocacy (BRAD), the results revealed both direct and indirect effects. Direct effects on Brand Advocacy were observed from Company Image (COIM), Trust in Sales Representatives (TRUS), Customer Experience (CUEX), and Service Satisfaction (SESA), with

effect sizes of 0.10, 0.11, 0.79, and 0.08, respectively. These findings emphasize the critical role of customer experience in directly influencing brand advocacy, supported by trust and service satisfaction.

Additionally, the analysis identified significant indirect effects on Brand Advocacy (BRAD) mediated through Service Satisfaction (SESA). The indirect effect sizes for Company Image (COIM), Trust in Sales Representatives (TRUS), and Customer Experience (CUEX) were 0.13, 0.14, and 0.16, respectively. These results indicate that service satisfaction serves as an essential mediating variable, amplifying the influence of company image, trust, and customer experience on brand advocacy.

Summarize Discussion and Recommendations

Summarize

Overall, the findings validate the structural equation model, demonstrating how service satisfaction and other related factors interact to influence brand advocacy in the context of Thailand's retail IT business. The model, as illustrated in Figure 1, effectively captures the causal relationships between these variables, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding the dynamics of sales representatives' service satisfaction and advocacy behavior.

Discussion

Research Analysis and Hypotheses Testing

This study explores the causal factors influencing service satisfaction and brand advocacy in Thailand's retail IT business. The hypotheses were analyzed as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Company Image affects Service Satisfaction from the perspective of sales representatives. The findings revealed a statistically significant direct effect at the 0.01 level, with an effect size of 0.24. This aligns with studies by Su, L. & Swanson, S.R. (2017).and Lai, F., et al.(2009), which demonstrated that company image influences customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Hypothesis 2: Company Image affects Brand Advocacy of sales representatives. The results showed a statistically significant direct effect at the 0.05 level with an effect size of 0.10, and an indirect effect size of 0.13. These findings are consistent with the research of Lee, K.T. and Koo, D.M. (2012), and Huang Y.C., et al .(2014), which highlight the impact of company image on brand advocacy.

Hypothesis 3: Trust in Sales Representatives affects Service Satisfaction from the perspective of sales representatives. The study found a statistically significant direct effect at the 0.01 level, with an effect size of 0.27. This supports the findings of Homburg, C., et al. (2009). and Kundu, S. & Datta, S.K. (2015),which emphasize the role of trust in shaping satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4: Trust in Sales Representatives affects Brand Advocacy of sales representatives. The findings revealed statistically significant effects at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels, with a direct effect size of 0.11 and an indirect effect size of 0.14. These results align with studies by Kao, H., et al. (2016) and Abdel-Shafy, H.I. & Mansour, M.S.M. (2016). which show trust's influence on brand advocacy.

Hypothesis 5: Customer Experience affects Service Satisfaction from the perspective of sales representatives. The study revealed a statistically significant direct effect at the 0.01 level, with an effect size of 0.25. These findings correspond with the research of Klaus, P. & Maklan, S. (2013). and Verhoef, P.C., et. al. (2009). Highlighting the importance of customer experience in satisfaction.

Hypothesis 6: Customer Experience affects Brand Advocacy of sales representatives. The findings demonstrated statistically significant effects at the 0.01 and 0.05 levels, with a direct effect size of 0.79 and an indirect effect size of 0.16. This is consistent with the findings of Klaus, P. & Maklan, S. (2013). and Payne, A.F.,et al. (2008). which indicate customer experience's pivotal role in brand advocacy.

Hypothesis 7: Service Satisfaction affects Brand Advocacy of sales representatives. The study found a statistically significant direct effect at the 0.05 level, with an effect size of 0.08. These results align with studies by Beigi et al. (2016) and Ali et al. (2016), which emphasize the connection between satisfaction and brand advocacy.

The results of all seven hypotheses confirm the significant relationships between company image, trust, customer experience, service satisfaction, and brand advocacy in Thailand's retail IT business. This research provides a robust framework for understanding the dynamics that influence service satisfaction and brand advocacy in this sector.

Research Recommendations

This research provides recommendations divided into three sections: academic suggestions, practical suggestions for retail IT business operators, and suggestions for future research. The details are as follows:

1. Academic Recommendations

The findings from this study contribute to academic understanding of the causal factors influencing Service Satisfaction and Brand Advocacy in the perspective of sales representatives within Thailand's retail IT business. The relationships between variables such as Company Image, Trust in Sales Representatives, Customer Experience, Service Satisfaction, and Brand Advocacy can be further developed into theoretical frameworks and applied to other academic fields. These insights can also inform interdisciplinary studies, expanding the understanding of satisfaction and advocacy dynamics in various contexts.

2. Practical Recommendations for Retail IT Business Operators

The study's findings can help retail IT business operators in planning and policy-making to enhance Service Satisfaction and ultimately strengthen Brand Advocacy. Recommendations include

New Knowledge form Research

Improving Company Image: A positive company image directly influences customer satisfaction, sales growth, profitability, and customer loyalty. Operators should focus on enhancing aspects such as trustworthiness, innovation, and friendliness. Policies should aim to foster credibility, modernity, creativity, and academic excellence while building positive relationships with customers through attentiveness and friendliness.

Building Trust in Sales Representatives: Trust is built through past experiences and satisfaction with service delivery. Operators should promote the skill development, honesty, and attentiveness of sales representatives, ensuring that they fulfill promises and address customer needs sincerely. Trust leads to customer satisfaction, loyalty, and repeated engagement with the organization.

Enhancing Customer Experience: Positive customer experiences significantly impact satisfaction and loyalty. Operators should create strategies that ensure seamless experiences throughout the Customer Journey, from product discovery to post-purchase interactions. This includes providing relevant product information, facilitating easy transactions, and resolving customer issues promptly.

Fostering Service Satisfaction: Service satisfaction is critical for assessing service quality and effectiveness. Operators should focus on improving aspects such as delivery, assistance, and overall care provided by sales representatives. Satisfied representatives are likely to

exhibit greater motivation and a positive attitude, leading to higher customer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

Strengthening Brand Advocacy: Operators can leverage satisfied sales representatives to promote the brand. Policies should encourage repeat purchases, word-of-mouth referrals, and participation in marketing activities. This is particularly relevant in the current era, where advocates often act as reviewers or influencers, affecting purchasing decisions. Encouraging advocacy through customer engagement and brand protection measures is essential for sustainable growth.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should focus on validating the proposed causal model to ensure consistency with empirical data.

Additional factors influencing Service Satisfaction and Brand Advocacy should be explored, as this study may not have included all relevant variables.

Future studies should employ qualitative methods to gain deeper insights into the factors affecting Service Satisfaction and Brand Advocacy from the perspective of sales representatives in Thailand's retail IT business.

These recommendations provide actionable insights for academics, practitioners, and future researchers, paving the way for a more comprehensive understanding of satisfaction and advocacy in the retail IT sector.

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