



Tourist shopping of apparel products and brand loyalty

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Abstract

Tourist shopping is one of the highly important and relevant topics in tourism study. With an increasing number of tourists around the world, many countries offer shopping campaigns and incentives, such as special promotions for tourists and tax refund for tourists. There are growing numbers of fashion apparel stores targeting international tourists as their primary customers. The concept of brand loyalty has been mainly discussed in shopping behaviors in the general consumer context. Limited studies examine brand loyalty in the context of tourists. Although there is a growing consumption of luxury apparel products in developing countries, studies on this product consumption are still lacking (Kumar, Lee, & Kim, 2009). Therefore, this research examines the impact of achievement shopping, perceived quality, brand awareness and status consumption as the predictors on brand loyalty in the context of international tourists in Bangkok, Thailand.

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Introduction

The global tourism industry has been growing with the continuous development of infrastructure, transportation and increasing the purchasing power of people in many countries, especially from emerging economies. As a result, the number of international tourists multiplies every year. Major tourist destinations have received increasing revenues from tourists through their expenditures, such as rooms, transportation, and shopping (Kim, 2006; To, Liao, & Lin, 2007; Yu, 2014). Thailand is known as one of the most popular tourist destinations due to its natural and cultural attractions. Tourist shopping on fashionable branded products in shops and department stores has become more important (Chetanont, 2015). According to Thiumsak and Ruangkanjanases (2016), shopping is one of the satisfaction attributes which has a positive influence on tourists' revisit intention to Bangkok. With special discounts and promotion for tourists, many department stores are now aiming at international tourists as one of their target customers. In addition, international tourists

can get a tax refund when they shop and make several purchases (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2016).

With the increasing number of luxury retail outlets and the rising number of international tourists, there is an opportunity for Thailand to capture this market. Since there are limited studies exploring tourist shopping for branded products, this paper aims to fill the research gap. In this study, brand loyalty, brand awareness, achievement shopping, perceived quality, and status consumption were investigated. The goal of the current study was to demonstrate the influencing factors affecting brand loyalty of tourists. In addition, this research is different from past research in that the current study introduced the concepts of status consumption and achievement shopping in the context tourism studies, highlighting the research gap in this field of study.

The benefits from the study are to provide guidelines to help businesses in the retail sector, especially in apparel-related products, to improve their business operations in order to attract and enhance the level of brand loyalty, leading to sustainable business performance. Since the main target of the study is international tourists and tourist expenditure is known to be one of the most important revenues for the Thai economy, improving tourist brand loyalty towards shopping products in Thailand can highly support the economic development of Thailand. Furthermore, practical and useful recommendations can be provided.

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Literature Review

Little research in the areas of both tourism and retailing industry attempted to explore the relationship of brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand awareness, status consumption, and achievement shopping (MacDonald & Sharp, 2000; Parida & Sahney, 2017; Yang & Kim, 2012). Past research studies in the field of retailing mainly focused on brand awareness. However, as for the originality of this study, the proposed model (Figure 1) is aimed to uniquely provide a clearer understanding of the relationship among the above-mentioned factors in the context of apparel products from the viewpoints of international tourists.

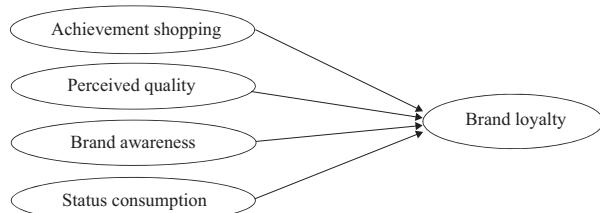


Figure 1 Proposed model

Apparel Products

Apparel products are garments and ready-made clothes which also include accessories such as underwear, hats, ties, shoes, gloves, socks and scarfs (Lien, 2009). Krishna (2011) classified apparel products into men's wear (for men and boys), women's wear (for women and girls), and infant's wear (for infants) including both under and outer garments: dresses, suits, coats, jackets, tops, shirts, skirts, blouses, sweatshirts, sweaters, and underwear. Rathod and Bhatt (2014) classified apparel products based on the retailer: multi-brand retailers (selling a mix of private brands and national brands in the store) and single brand retailers (selling only their own private brands).

Luxury Brands

As the perception of luxury alters across time and culture, a brand that is considered as luxurious for one person might be common and mainstream for another person. According to O'Cass and McEwen (2004) luxury fashion brands are believed to be purchased in order to allow customers to gain prestige, which is also known as conspicuous consumption. In order to build a personalized relationship with their customers, luxury brands such as Louis Vuitton and Bottega Venetta now offer customization programs that allow customers to add their names and colors to their products (Yoo & Park, 2016).

De Barnier, Falcy and Valette-Florence (2012) displayed three areas of luxury: accessible, intermediate and inaccessible. Heine (2012) categorized luxury brands by luxury level (entry-level, medium-level, top-level, and elite-level), by awareness (connoisseur and stars—little stars, big stars, and global stars), and by business sales volume (micro-scale, small-scale, medium-scale, large-scale, big player, and giant player). Resulting from the innovations in production, luxury products have been democratized in the past decade where

goods are in shorter life span than in the past (Ajitha & Sivakumar, 2019). Luxury products can be classified into “old” and “new” luxury where old luxury products are uncommon, limited and available merely to the rich. On the other hand, new luxury products are pricey goods that are available to the mass market (Ajitha & Sivakumar, 2019; Granot, Russell, & Brashear-Alejandro, 2013). Truong, McColl, and Kitchen (2009) considered the new luxury as *masstige* in premium brands such as Ralph Lauren and Calvin Klein. Bachmann, Walsh, and Hammes (2019) define “luxury brands” as the top level of prestigious brands that provide a remarkable and desired value, which is more than its functionality, compared to other brands in the same category of products.

Brand Loyalty

According to Aaker (1991), brand loyalty is one of the attributes in brand equity. It is the level of attachment a customer has to a brand. Pappu and Quester (2016) suggested that brand loyalty was determined by the satisfaction of customers. Meanwhile, brand loyalty was believed to reflect a long-term choice possible for the brand or company and was involved in both the attitudes and behaviors of customers. Many researchers also stated that brand loyalty was considered a dynamic process rather than a static behavioural aspect (Parida & Sahney, 2017). Moreover, brand loyalty differs between luxury and non-luxury consumers. Sathopoulou and Balabaris (2016) found that luxury buyers view the brand loyalty program as hedonic benefits, but non-luxury buyers view it as utilitarian benefits.

Strong brand loyalty is revealed by customers' emotional attachment to a brand and their patronage behavior toward the brand (Cho, Rha, & Burt, 2015). In this respect, the previous study demonstrated that consumers' emotional responses to brands influence brand loyalty. Like Punniyamoorthy's and Raj's study (2007), this paper focused on brand loyalty as a multidimensional construct. Nevertheless, our model consists of four constructs namely achievement shopping, perceived quality, brand awareness, and status consumption. The survey questions for brand loyalty were adapted from Pappu and Quester (2016) and Cho, Rha, and Burt (2015).

Achievement Shopping

Achievement shopper is known as the apathetic consumer who tends to shop for necessity and is not concerned with shopping enjoyment (Kim, 2006). Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) referred achievement shopping to a task where its value is measured mainly on the accomplishment of shopping. It is also described as shopping which is vital, logical, decision effective, and goal-oriented (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). Achievement shopping is when a person focuses solely on one's shopping objectives (Yang & Kim, 2012) and reveals that shopping begins from a purpose or mission and value of one's shopping relies on whether the mission is done effectively or not (To et al., 2007). The survey questions for achievement shopping were developed from Kim, (2006), Yang & Kim, (2012) and To et al., (2007).

H1: Achievement shopping has a positive influence on brand loyalty.

Perceived Quality

Zeithaml (1988) defined perceived quality as the subjective reasoning of consumer about the overall distinction or superiority of the products and services. This means products with high perceived quality would make a consumer select the specific product brand rather than others. Snoj, Pisnik Korda, and Mumel (2004) suggested that consumers are more likely to depend on extrinsic cues when they have inadequate information about intrinsic product attributes or time to assess intrinsic cues. Bartikowski, Kamei, and Chandon (2010) claimed that higher quality perceptions of consumers led to an increase in profitability and created business growth (including market expansion and market share gains) in the long run. The measurement of perceived quality was adapted from Snoj, Pisnik Korda, and Mumel (2004) and Bartikowski et al. (2010).

H2: Perceived quality has a positive influence on brand loyalty.

Brand Awareness

According to Keller (1993), brand awareness is considered one of the brand knowledge components. Brand awareness is how the potential buyers recognize a brand as a member of a certain product or service category. Thus, it is how the customer could recognize and recall a particular brand. Brand awareness is considered an important step before a purchase decision, leading to the increase in brand market performance (MacDonald & Sharp, 2000; Xu, Li, & Zhou, 2015). It is a leading option approach among awareness group subjects since customers decide from a group of brands with observed differences revealing a significant preference for the superior awareness brand, notwithstanding quality and price differences (MacDonald & Sharp, 2000; Xu et al., 2015). In fact, these customers also made their decisions faster than customers in the non-awareness situation and tried smaller number of brands (Cho et al., 2015; MacDonald & Sharp, 2000). The construct of brand awareness used in this study and survey was derived from MacDonald & Sharp (2000) and Xu, Li, & Zhou (2015).

H3: Brand awareness has a positive influence on brand loyalty.

Status Consumption

Status consumption is the inspirational means by which a person reflects one's social standing through the purchase of commodities that could symbolize status for the surrounding others (Heaney, Goldsmith, & Jusoh, 2005). O'Cass and McEwen (2004) defined status consumption as the behavioral tendency to value status by consuming goods or services that provide status to the individual. In other words, status consumption is when an individual displays wealth and status through the purchase of luxury goods due to the attributes of higher cost (Yu, 2014). Grotts and Johnson (2013) studied status consumption on Millennial consumers and believed that there is a relationship between people who consume products for status consumption and who have a high achievement orientation. Therefore, material goods purchase is the best

means of social status and achievement (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004). The constructs of status consumption used in this study were developed from Yu, (2014) and Grotts & Johnson (2013).

H4: Status consumption has a positive influence on brand loyalty.

Methodology

This study employed a questionnaire survey to collect the data from international tourists in Bangkok. A pre-test of 30 respondents was conducted before distributing the questionnaires. In order to prevent biasness, convenient sampling was used. 409 questionnaires were collected from international tourists at duty-free outlets at Suvarnabhumi Airport and shopping venues such as Central World, Siam Paragon, and Siam Square. Only tourists who bought apparel products were included. Non-English speakers, expats, and tourists below 18 years were excluded in the study. Respondents were asked to rate each question based on a five-point Likert scale, from 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree". To analyze the data, structural equation modeling was used to test the significant relationships among all the constructs.

Data Collection

Prior to collecting data from the international tourists, screening questions were used to ensure the following criteria. Firstly, the respondents were international tourists with short-term stay in Thailand. Secondly, the respondents had purchased branded apparel products from the shops in Thailand. 409 self-administered questionnaires were collected from the international tourists in Bangkok that had experience purchasing apparel products during their trips. The participants were international tourists, excluding those aged below 18 years old.

This study used Structural Equation Modeling in order to analyze the relationship among constructs. In order to evaluate each multi-item scale in developing the constructs, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were checked and proved to meet the acceptance criteria before testing the hypotheses (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

Results and Discussion

Regarding descriptive statistics, from 409 international tourists, male respondents were slightly higher (53.50%) than females. 60.10 percent of the sample were aged between 20–39 years old. Most tourists were single (61.90%) and the majority had earned bachelor's degree (66.30%). Most were private employees (37.40%) and on average, they had an annual income below \$20,000. Asian tourists represented the largest group (45.70%) of tourists.

Regarding factor loadings of constructs, all items showed the values greater than .8, indicating the acceptable level of the constructs. From Table 1, regarding reliability analysis, the Cronbach's alpha of each variable was above .70 recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). In addition, the composite reliability (CR) coefficients of the variables were higher than .6 recommended by Bagozzi and Yi (1988) and Fornell and Larcker (1981).

Table 1 Factor loadings of constructs

Construct	Factor loading	Items
Achievement shopping	.804	I always plan my shopping trips.
	.845	It is important to accomplish what I had planned on particular shopping trips.
Perceived Quality	.811	Products from this brand would be of very good quality.
	.830	Products from this brand offer excellent features.
	.891	The likelihood that this brand is reliable is very high.
Brand awareness	.827	I can recognize this brand quickly among other competing brands.
	.806	I easily recognize this brand.
	.829	I am familiar with this brand.
Brand loyalty	.812	I consider myself to be loyal to this brand.
	.896	If in future I want to buy the new apparel products, this brand would be my first choice.
	.840	I will buy this brand even if it increases in price.
Status consumption	.853	I would buy a product just because it has status.
	.815	I would pay more for a product if it had status.

The aspect of convergent validity and discriminant validity proposed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) shows that the factor loadings were above .8 (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988) and the average variance extracted (AVE) of measurable is higher than .5 recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981). This indicated that the measurement model achieved convergent validity. For discriminant validity, Fornell and Larcker (1981) suggested that discriminant validity is established if each construct's average variance extracted (AVE) must be greater than its squared correlations with other constructs in the model. The results were as shown in Table 2 and Table 3.

After measuring the relationship and validity of the constructs, the proposed model was tested and model fit indices were as shown in Table 4. The indices met the acceptance criteria and therefore the results can be further interpreted in order to explain the objectives of the study, as shown in Table 4.

From Table 5, the results identified that out of four relationships, perceived quality has the highest influence on brand loyalty, followed by achievement shopping and brand awareness, respectively. Only status consumption has no significant influence on brand loyalty.

Table 2 Criteria for validity and reliability

Construct	AVE	Square root of AVE	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability
Brand loyalty	.723	.850	.71	.754
Brand awareness	.674	.821	.78	.7150
Perceived quality	.714	.845	.78	.7465
Achievement shopping	.680	.825	.73	.7205
Status consumption	.696	.834	.77	.733

Table 3 Correlation matrix of research constructs

Construct	Brand Loyalty	Brand Awareness	Perceived Quality	Achievement Shopping	Status Consumption
Brand Loyalty	.850				
Brand Awareness	.532	.821			
Perceived Quality	.571	.432	.845		
Achievement Shopping	.421	.532	.488	.825	
Status Consumption	.489	.547	.570	.399	.834

Notes: The numbers in diagonal are the square root of average variance extracted by each construct. The numbers below diagonal are the squared correlation coefficients between constructs.

Table 4 Model fit indices

Fit Index	Value	Critical (Acceptable value)
Chi-Square fit (<i>p</i> -value) (CHI-SQUARE = 180.347; df = 61)	.000	>.05
NFI (Normed Fit Index)	.911	>.9
NNFI (Non-Normed Fit Index)	.901	>.9
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	.922	>.9
IFI (Incremental Fit Index)	.922	>.9
GFI (Goodness of Fit index)	.926	>.9
RMSEA (Root Means Square Error of Approximation)	.073	<.08

Table 5 Parameter estimated

Hypothesis	Standardized Coefficient	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Results
H1: Achievement shopping → Brand loyalty	.333	4.075	< .05	Supported
H2: Perceived quality → Brand loyalty	.558	5.834	< .05	Supported
H3: Brand awareness → Brand loyalty	.310	3.751	< .05	Supported
H4: Status consumption → Brand loyalty	.04	.545	> .05	Not Supported

According to the findings of the study, perceived quality, achievement shopping, and brand awareness had a significantly positive influence on brand loyalty, while status consumption had no effect on brand loyalty. First, the hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 were supported, demonstrating that helping the tourists to achieve their planned shopping goals, enhancing the perception of quality of the products, and increasing brand awareness is significant to improve the brand loyalty. Perceived quality had the positive influence on brand loyalty. The works of Yoo, Donthu, and Lee (2000) and Bartikowski et al. (2010) supported this result.

Like the findings of Yang and Kim (2012), achievement shopping showed a significant influence on brand loyalty. The current study also confirmed the relationship between brand awareness and brand loyalty, meaning that the higher degree of brand awareness can lead to greater brand loyalty. Several empirical research studies (e.g. Chi, Yeh, & Yang, 2009; Keller, 1993) had identified this causal relationship. In addition, recent studies continued to show the significant relationship of brand awareness on brand loyalty (Cho et al., 2015; Xu et al., 2015).

According to Goldsmith, Flynn, and Kim (2010), status consumption has an important impact on consumer behavior and partially influenced brand loyalty. However, the results of this study showed no influence of status consumption on brand loyalty. Hypothesis 4 was not supported by the findings.

From the above results and discussions, contrary to past study, status consumption demonstrated no effect on brand loyalty. The unique situation provided a new dimension of the relationship between these constructs in the context of apparel shopping and tourists behaviors.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study distinctively investigated brand loyalty and its determinants in the tourism perspectives. As tourist shopping activities have been growing rapidly, together with the economic significance to the host country, over the past decade, many brand name apparel stores have attempted to increase sales for international tourists. This current research demonstrated the usefulness of understanding more about relationships among brand loyalty, brand awareness, status consumption, perceived quality and achievement shopping. From managerial contribution standpoints, companies can increase efforts on improving brand loyalty accurately and the results of the study have contributed to the purpose. As perceived quality has a high influence on brand loyalty, it is crucial to highlight the quality of the apparel products in order to influence the perception of the shoppers.

The important contributions from this study can be two-fold. Firstly, at the business level, managers of brand name products can develop business strategy by raising the awareness and

availability of their products, highlighting the quality of the products with certificates and awards, and promoting the product brand via social media and other promotional tools regularly. Luxury brand retailers also need to invest in the loyalty program in order to build trust among customers. Customer shopping experience should also be elevated throughout their shopping time at the store (Ko, Phau, & Aiello, 2016; Stathopoulou & Balabanis, 2016). In addition, as achievement shopping has a significant effect on brand loyalty, retail stores should try to emphasize the added value of their products so that the tourists will better appreciate their purchase and repurchase those brands. Additionally, promoting the products as limited edition can enhance the values of the products from the point of view of the tourists as well. In addition, brand awareness also plays an important role in brand loyalty. The brand managers may need to promote their product brands where international tourists visit regularly, such as leading tourism spots in the main tourist destinations.

Secondly, at the policy level, tourism in Thailand has continued to expand and it is a good opportunity to increase the source of revenue from tourist shopping expenditures. The government can offer tools and support to help Thai apparel brands to be recognized internationally to increase the brand awareness because this can lead to brand loyalty, implying a repurchasing of the brand name products, which leads to sustainable business and economic performance in the future. Further research may continue to study the aspects of levels of the brand (e.g. major brands and sub-brands) or the role of generations (e.g. Generation X or Y) on brand loyalty. Studies in the future could examine the new luxury and old luxury brand consumption. Tourist types or typology of tourists (e.g. business and leisure travelers) for brand loyalty would also be recommended for further study. Instead of studying luxury brands in general, specific luxury brands or luxury products could also be further examined among tourists (Bachmann et al., 2019). Specific nationality of tourists could be also be addressed in future study.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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