

Personalized Marketing Affecting Word-of-Mouth Communication Through Consumer Experience as Mediator

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Abstract

This research aimed to study the effects of personalized marketing to word-of-mouth communication through consumer experience as mediator by examining factors that included demographic, service quality, marketing communications, consumer experience, and word-of-mouth communication. Data had been collected from sample group which were population in generation Z in Sriracha district, Chonburi province. Research instrument was using 400 sets of questionnaires that had been verified. Statistics used for analysis were Regression and Correlation Analysis. Study showed that 2 factors affected personalized marketing of consumers in Sriracha district, Chonburi province. The most correlated factor that affecting word-of-mouth communication was service quality, following by marketing communication. When consumer experience factor was mediator, the most correlated factor that affecting word-of-mouth communication was marketing communication and following by service quality though. A similarity in demographic showed result in standard deviation that most factors contained small values. This represents a concentration of data. Most of sample group had similar opinion since they were generation Z. Generation Z will be the important group that stimulating and driving the economy in the future.

Keywords: Personalized Marketing, Word-of-Mouth Communication, Customer Experience

Introduction

Niche Marketing recently becomes an important business strategy since behavior of a customer is unique and contains individual preference. Niche Marketing can improve performance in business competition and response to customer's requirements (Thanapoom Ativetin, 2018). Mass Marketing becomes obsoleted, many businesses are changing to Niche Marketing instead since it corresponds to Personalized Marketing. It focuses on specified customers and represents the actual needs of customers in each group (Looney, Jacobson & Redding, 2011). Personalized Marketing can increase the profit of a brand up to 15 percent and

conduct 75 percent of customers to recognize a brand when they want any product or service. This illustrates a high potential in Personalized Marketing that will become crucial part in many businesses (Bolton, Gustafsson, McColl-Kennedy, Sirianni and Tse, 2014).

Personalized Marketing can create efficiency for businesses in many aspects including operation, competition, and sales. It suits customers in Generation Z since they are growing with modern technology, preferring happiness and comfort, living in a fast pace. They are creative, have high self-esteem, focus on self-identity, need social acceptance, and accept only useful information. Generation Z customers aren't attached to any brand so when they find products or services that are more suitable for their needs then they are always ready to change. An ordinary marketing may not communicate to Generation Z customers. Businesses tend to utilize digital medias as channels for communications with them instead, this includes many virtual reality channels that are crucial parts in their Lifestyle. Propaganda marketing is less effective to Generation Z customers, on the other hand, Personalized Marketing that realizes and understands any individual need can signify customers and encourage their confidence to receive information before making purchase. Eventually interesting and willing to buy (Francis and Hoefel, 2018).

The effective Personalized Marketing that can create value and satisfaction among customers are depending on many crucial factors to conduct and adapt outstanding strategies. Service quality is the important factor which customers are always expecting from businesses and can create satisfaction and impression to a brand (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 2002). Another factor is effective and fine communication which may conduct awareness, understanding, and persuasion in customers. These 2 factors conduct Customer Experience (Peerapong Tanwittayanon, Kesara Sukphet and Chokchai Suwetwatanakul, 2019; Nutthawong Chaowiang and Wichit Oon, 2018). When customers have decent experiences with businesses, customers tend to communicate via Word-of-Mouth to express their experiences in products and services to people around them. Word-of-Mouth communication that has been conducted by customers will be the most reliable media (Maklan and Klaus, 2011).

The study of Service quality factor and Communication factor that affection Word-of-Mouth via Customer Experience as mediator will construct knowledge and understanding in adapting Personalized Marketing to business strategies and altering plans to respond recent behavior of customers with supreme effectiveness. This will also benefit businesses to create their capabilities in competition, outstanding products, and exceptional services.

Objectives

1. To study factors of service quality affecting Word-of-Mouth through Customer Experience as mediator.
2. To study factors of communications affecting Word-of-Mouth through Customer Experience as mediator.
3. To study factors of Customer Experience affecting Word-of-Mouth.

Conceptual Framework

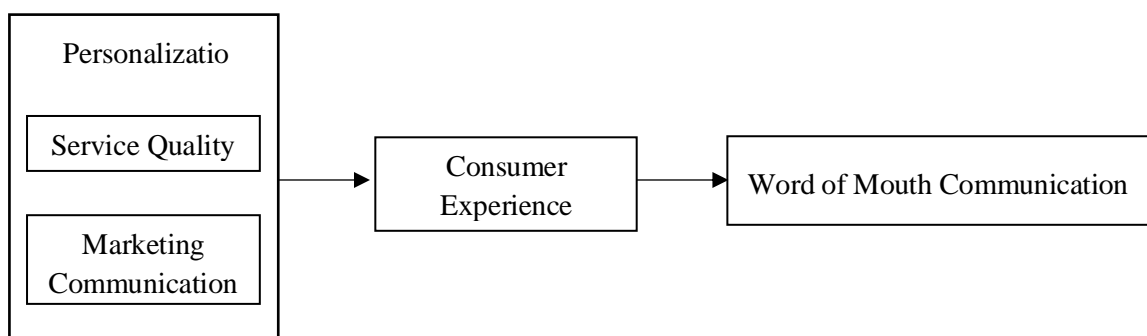


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Research Hypothesis

- H1: Service Quality is affecting Word-of-Mouth
- H2: Marketing Communication is affecting Word-of-Mouth
- H3: Consumer Experience is affecting Word-of-Mouth
- H4: Service Quality is affecting Consumer Experience
- H5: Marketing Communication is affecting Consumer Experience
- H6: Service Quality is affecting Word-of-Mouth via Consumer Experience as mediator
- H7: Marketing Communication is affecting Word-of-Mouth via Consumer Experience as mediator

Research Methodology

Population and Sample Group

Population of this research was Generation Z in Sriracha District, Chonburi Province. Sample group was 400 students aged between 17-25 years that was calculated from ready-made tables and Cochran's formula (1963). Subgroups were determined by gender, with total of 2 groups contained 200 male and 200 female.

Research Instrument

This research used both online questionnaire via Google Form platform and offline questionnaire for research instrument. All questions were generated from literature reviews that related to each factor and had been verified for reliability. Research had reviewed research objectives to consider which variables were needed for questionnaires. In this study, independent variables are Service Quality and Marketing Communication. Dependent variable is Word-of-Mouth. Mediator is Customer Experience. Related theories and studies were examined. This research used Structure-undisguised Questionnaire with Close-ended questions. Questions was used with Interval Scale from 1 to 5, 1 means the lowest level of consent and 5 means the highest level of consent. Questionnaire contained 5 parts as per following.

Part 1: Questions about demographic of participants including gender, age, education, occupation, and monthly income.

Part 2: Questions about independent variables which are Service Quality factors in Close-ended questions containing Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy.

Part 3: Questions about independent variables which are Marketing Communication factors in Close-ended questions containing Advertising, Public Relation, Sale Promotion, Personal Selling, and Direct Marketing.

Part 4: Questions about Mediators which are Experience factors in Close-ended questions containing Customer Experience, Customer Experience Management, and Result of Customer Experience Factor.

Part 5: Questions about dependent variables which are Word-of-Mouth factors in Close-ended questions containing Characteristic of Word-of-Mouth, Channel of Word-of-Mouth, Considering Pattern of Word-of-Mouth.

Questionnaire Verification

Researchers had conducted IOC (Index of Item Objective Congruence) and allow experts to verify the questionnaire to ensure its performance and reliability. Questionnaire was tested to ensure that participants acquire the same understanding and answer all questions truthfully. 50 sets of questionnaires were tested with sample group. Data was analyzed with Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (Sombat Tai Rue Kha, 2008) to verify reliable level of questionnaires.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient

Factors	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient			
	section	experimental group n=50	section	sample group n=50
Service	15	0.9146	15	0.8656
Communication	20	0.8696	20	0.8799
Experience	8	0.8532	8	0.8290
Word of Mouth	8	0.7106	8	0.5988

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (α) has criteria $0 < \alpha < 1$. Reliability verification showed the reliable score when conducted pilot test with 50 sample was 0.8370 and reliable score from 400 sets of questionnaires was 0.7933. 51 questions had reliable score from 0.600 to 0.9146. In conclusion, all of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of 2 sample groups were within the criteria (Nunnally, 1978).

Data Analysis and Hypothesis Verification

Researchers had determined reliable level at 95 percent for data analysis and hypothesis verification of this research. Data had been analyzed in 2 parts.

1. Descriptive Statistics Analysis including Frequency, Percentage, Mean, and Standard Deviation were used to analyze demographic data of participants.

2. Inferential Statistics Analysis including Regression and Correlation Analysis were used to verify the hypothesis of this research by Linear Regression method to explain the influence of independent variables to dependent variables and Process Regression to explain the influence of independent variables to dependent variables with correlation of mediators.

Research Findings

Sample group was 400 people in Generation Z who were living in Sriracha District, Chonburi Province, 200 people are female (50 %) and 200 people are male (50 %). Most of them aged 21-30 years (52.75 %), had bachelor's degree (55.75 %), were students (82.25 %), and had monthly income less than 10,000 THB (61.25 %).

Mean and Standard Deviation of level of consent of independent variables, dependent variables, and mediators

1. Analysis of Service Quality factors showed that most participants had high level of consent ($\bar{X} = 4.12$, S.D. = 0.786). Considering on each aspect, Assurance aspect on staffs are polite and have decent manners in service had the highest level ($\bar{X} = 4.31$, S.D. = 0.765), following by Responsiveness aspect on staffs contain service standard ($\bar{X} = 4.23$, S.D. = 0.750) and Reliability aspect on staffs service professionally throughout their duty ($\bar{X} = 4.19$, S.D. = 0.762).

2. Analysis of Marketing Communication factors showed that most participants had high level of consent ($\bar{X} = 4.04$, S.D. = 0.814). Considering on each aspect, Sale Promotion aspect on promoting management can increase purchase intention had the highest level ($\bar{X} = 4.23$, S.D. = 0.773). Following by Personal Selling aspect on sale person is knowledgeable in answering questions ($\bar{X} = 4.22$, S.D. = 0.783) and Advertising aspect on Advertising can increase brand awareness ($\bar{X} = 4.13$, S.D. = 0.805).

3. Analysis of Customer Experience factors showed that most participants had high level of consent ($\bar{X} = 4.15$, S.D. = 0.770). Considering on each aspect, Result from Customer Experience aspect on Receiving experiences beyond the expectation increasing repurchase intention had the highest level ($\bar{X} = 4.29$, S.D. = 0.728). Following by Customer Experience Management aspect on a brand signifying customer such as providing gifts creates decent relationship ($\bar{X} = 4.22$, S.D. = 0.703) and Customer Experience aspect on transparent communication creates effective perceived experience ($\bar{X} = 4.21$, S.D. = 0.704).

4. Analysis of Word-of-Mouth factors showed that most participants had high level of consent ($\bar{X} = 4.05$, S.D. = 0.811). Considering on each aspect, Characteristics of Word-of-Mouth aspect on brand satisfaction will provide information to other people for their convenience had the highest level ($\bar{X} = 4.26$, S.D. = 0.717). Following by Channal of Word-of-Mouth aspect on brands conducting preferable activities encouraging customers to spread the word around ($\bar{X} = 4.11$, S.D. = 0.743) and Considering Patterns of Word-of-Mouth aspect on positive Word-of-Mouth increases purchase intention ($\bar{X} = 4.04$, S.D. = 0.772).

Analysis of correlation in variables

Analysis of correlation in variables showed results of correlation coefficient within the predictor variable and the correlation coefficient between the variables.

Table 2: Correlation of Variables

Personalized Marketing	Word-of-Mouth through Customer Experience as mediator			
\bar{X} S.D.	X ₁	X ₂	M	Y
	60.455 3.785	79.5675 5.977	33.233 2.697	
Service (x ₁)	1.000			
Communication (x ₂)	0.663	1.000		
Experience (M)	0.661	0.701	1.000	
Word of Mouth (Y)	0.520	0.643	0.652	1.000

Table 2 showed that Personalized Marketing had positive correlation with Word-of-Mouth via Customer Experience as mediator (r_{xy} at 0.520-0.701) with statistically significance 0.05. Variable that had the most correlation coefficient was Customer Experience (M = Mediator) and Marketing Communication (x₂ = independent variable) at 0.701. Since all Correlation Coefficient between variables were less than 0.80 then it contained none of Multicollinearity. In conclusion, variables that were studied could be used as a model for multiple regression equations (Devore and Peck, 1997).

Results of Hypothesis Verification

Researchers had verified correlation of independent variables including factors of service quality and marketing communication together with dependent variable including factor of Word-of-Mouth by Linear Regression.

Table 3: H1 and H2 verification

Factors	Word-of-Mouth factors						
	B	Std. error	Coefficients	t	Sig.	tolerance	VIF
Service	16.236	1.159		14.014	0.000		
	0.231	10019	0.520	12.133	0.000	1.000	1.000
Marketing Communication	12.387	1.071		11.517	0.000		
	0.224	0.013	0.643	16.745	0.000	1.000	1.000

H1: Service Quality is affecting Word-of-Mouth since Sig. of Service Quality was at 0.000 which less than statistically significance 0.05, it showed that Service Quality is affecting Word-of-Mouth. When customers received service with quality, they will conduct Word-of-Mouth to others.

H2: Marketing Communication is affecting Word-of-Mouth from Sig. of Marketing Communication was at 0.000 which less than statistically significance 0.05, it showed that Marketing Communication is affecting Word-of-Mouth. When customers received information and Marketing Communication including advertising, promotion, tele sale and direct sale, they will conduct Word-of-Mouth to others.

Researchers had verified correlation of mediator including factor of customer experience and dependent variable including factor of Word-of-Mouth by Process Regression.

Table 4: H3 verification

Factors	Word-of-Mouth factors			
	Coefficients	SE	t	Sig
Maintaining	11.718	0.098	10.676	0.000
Consumer experience	0.429	0.039	10.937	0.000

H3: Consumer Experience is affecting Word-of-Mouth since Sig. of Consumer Experience was at 0.000 which less than statistically significance 0.05, it showed that Consumer Experience is affecting Word-of-Mouth. When customers received experiences together with businesses, they will conduct Word-of-Mouth to others.

Researchers had verified correlation of independent variables including factors of service quality and marketing communication with mediator including factor of customer experience by Process Regression.

Table 5: H4 and H5 verification

Factors	Word-of-Mouth factors			
	Coefficients	SE	t	Sig
Maintaining	10.544	1.301	8.105	0.000
Service	0.375	0.021	17.566	0.000
Maintaining	8.418	1.274	6.606	0.000
Marketing communication	0.312	0.016	19.605	0.000

H4: Service Quality is affecting Consumer Experience since Sig of Service Quality was at 0.000 which less than statistically significance 0.05, it showed that Service Quality is affecting Consumer Experience. When customers received services with quality from businesses, they will be experiencing both positive and negative perspectives with brands.

H5: Marketing Communication is affecting Consumer Experience since Sig of Marketing Communication was at 0.000 which less than statistically significance 0.05, it showed Marketing Communication is affecting Consumer Experience. When customers received information and Marketing Communication including advertising, promotion, tele sale and direct sale, they will be experiencing both positive and negative perspectives with brands.

Researchers had verified correlation of independent variables including factors of service quality and marketing communication to dependent variable including Word-of-Mouth factor with mediator including factor of customer experience by Process Regression.

Table 6: H6 verification

Service quality					
Results	A	B	Total effect	Direct effect	Indirect effect
Coefficients	0.375	0.429	0.231	0.070	0.161
Sig	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.002	

H6: Service Quality is affecting Word-of-Mouth through Consumer Experience as mediator. Analysis showed that Service Quality had correlation with Word-of-Mouth at statistically significance 0.05, Sig 0.000. Service Quality is affecting Word-of-Mouth. Consumer Experience as mediator is affecting Word-of-Mouth at statistically significance 0.05, Sig 0.002, which less than statistically significant level. In conclusion, Service Quality is affecting Word-of-Mouth via Consumer Experience as mediator.

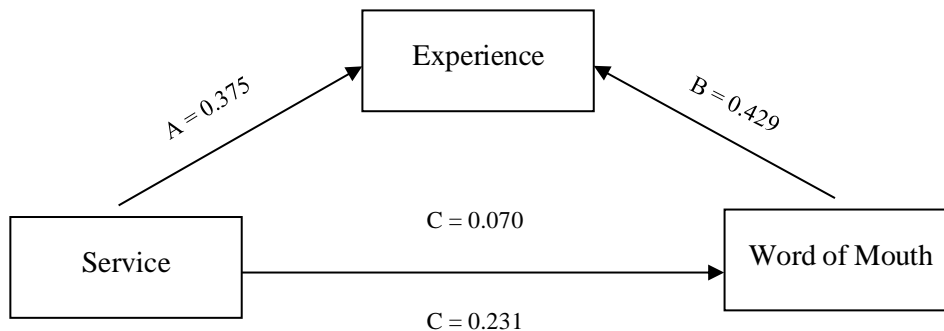


Figure 2: Illustration of correlation between Service factors and Word-of-Mouth factors via Experience factors as mediators

Service Quality affected Word-of-Mouth with correlation at 23.1 percent. While Customer Experience as mediator decreased correlation to 7 percent, it showed that Customer Experience had influenced Word-of-Mouth as Partial Mediator at 16.1 percent. Correlation of Service Quality to Customer Experience was at 37.5 percent and correlation of Customer Experience to Word-of-Mouth was 42.9 percent.

Researchers had verified correlation of Marketing Communication to Word-of-Mouth via Consumer Experience as mediator.

Table 7: H7 verification

Marketing Communication					
Results	A	B	Total effect	Direct effect	Indirect effect
Coefficients	0.312	0.310	0.224	0.127	0.097
Sig	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	

H7: Marketing Communication is affecting Word-of-Mouth via Consumer Experience as mediator. Analysis showed that Marketing Communication had correlation with Word-of-Mouth at statistically significance 0.05, Sig 0.000. Marketing Communication is affecting Word-of-Mouth. Consumer Experience as mediator is affecting Word-of-Mouth at statistically significance 0.05, Sig 0.000, which less than statistically significant level. In conclusion, Marketing Communication is affecting Word-of-Mouth via Consumer Experience as mediator.

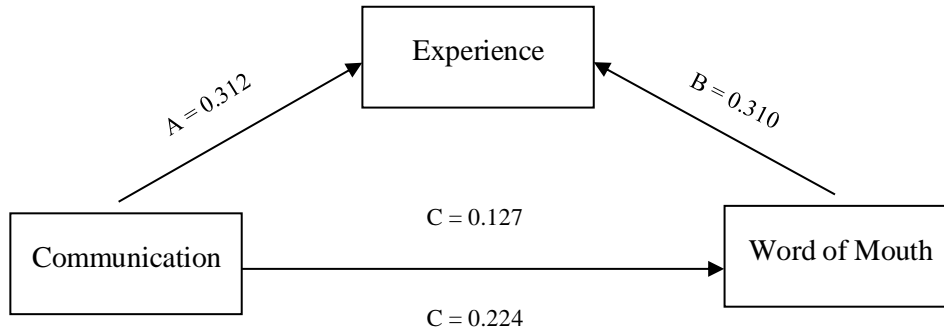


Figure 3: Illustration of correlation between Communication factors and Word-of-Mouth factors via Experience factors as mediators

Marketing Communication affected Word-of-Mouth with correlation at 22.4 %. While Customer Experience as mediator decreased correlation to 12.7 %, it showed that Customer Experience had influenced Word-of-Mouth as Partial Mediator at 9.7 %. Correlation of Marketing Communication to Customer Experience was at 31.2 % and correlation of Customer Experience to Word-of-Mouth was 31 %.

Discussion and Conclusion

Study of Personalized Marketing in Service Quality and Marketing Communication that have positive influence on Word-of-Mouth via Customer Experience as mediation showed as per below.

H1: Service Quality is positively affecting Word-of-Mouth. Businesses should focus on every component of the service quality including locations, staffs, reliability, skills, and response for any needs of customers. When customers satisfy with services, they will conduct Word-of-Mouth. Corresponding to Koehler and Pankowski (1996), quality of services from businesses to customers will fulfill their expectations and satisfaction. Corresponding to Richins & Root-Shaffer (1988), when customers receive services beyond their expectation, customers will conduct Word-of-Mouth to others.

H2: Marketing Communication is positively affecting Word-of-Mouth when businesses have integrated communication to their target group using 1. Advertising that will create brand awareness among customers from advertisements with fresh contents. 2. Public relation that could inform customers about products and services, increasing their purchase intention, knowing more about businesses. Medias should be well prepared and easy to understand though. 3. Sale Promotion such as discount on special occasions and product testing can stimulate customers. Corresponding to Kalaya Chayutrat (2007), Marketing Communication is crucial for recent operation in every business. Because when businesses produce products and services, they must communicate with customers with the most effective communication that will encourage Word-of-Mouth among customers. Corresponding to Anon Petchmanee (2015), exceptional marketing communication will lead to positive Word-of-Mouth.

H3: Consumer Experience is positively affecting Word-of-Mouth. Businesses that create outstanding experiences for customers in terms of service quality such as appropriated services and in terms of marketing communications such as media with exceptional quality that is easy to understand and remember with modern contents will influence Word-of-Mouth behavior. Corresponding to Pisit Phiphatpokakul (2018), experiences can happen from receiving superb services. Corresponding to Colin Shaw and John Ivens (2002), when businesses conduct activities that can communicate, encourage participation, and impress customers then customers will have decent experiences with brands.

H4: Service Quality is positively affecting Consumer Experience. Staffs with proper capabilities in services will influence customer experience. Corresponding to Colin Shaw and John Ivens (2002), Good services from staffs will help and guide customer in great manner. This is essential for service and will impress customers.

H5: Marketing Communication is positively affecting Consumer Experience. Sharp Marketing Communications and Marketing Activities such as discount and customer's participation are influencing Consumer Experience. Corresponding to Colin Shaw and John Ivens (2002), Marketing Communication helps businesses to create impressive experiences for customers. This can be conducted before, between, and after purchase by marketing strategies.

H6: Service Quality and Word-of-Mouth have positive correlation while Consumer Experience as mediator may decrease influence. Businesses that contain outstanding service quality including locations, staffs, reliability, skills, and response for any needs of customers will create superb experiences for customers. When customers have superb experiences, they will conduct Word-of-Mouth in a good way. Corresponding to Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (2002), good experiences come from services that are beyond expectations. Corresponding to Gelb, Betsy and Johnson (1995), Word-of-Mouth tends to happen from customers that received services beyond their expectations.

H7: Marketing Communication and Word-of-Mouth have positive correlation while Consumer Experience as mediator may decrease influence. Businesses that create medias with high quality that are easy to understand and fresh together with marketing activities that customers can participate will impress customers. Customers with good experience will positively contribute Word-of-Mouth to others. Corresponding to Bayus (1985), Good Marketing Communications should not contain too much information or too technical. Corresponding to Gelb, Betsy and Johnson (1995), Marketing Communications with proper contents can interest customers. Corresponding to Wiriya Kaewcharoensri (2015), Word-of-Mouth may be resulted from information without too much technical data since customers may be confused and annoyed. Integration of medias and simplified information is a proper communication.

Suggestions

This study showed that Personalized Marketing can support Word-of-Mouth, behaviors of customers in products and services, not only for customers in Generation Z but also for another age group. Businesses should focus on their service and communication first by developing modern marketing service and communication that can respond to their target customers.

Customers in Generation Z have high preference in service aspect. Businesses should develop concrete services that customers can easily perceive such as atmosphere, environment, decoration, and equipment. Staffs must be developed to be standardized and responsive. Services must be frequently improved. They can quickly respond to Marketing Communication, acquire many channels of communication, and interest in fresh presentations. This is also true in customers from another age group. Businesses must consider about the most effective and responsive communication in integrated way. Customers are responding to factors of Service Quality and Marketing Communication via forms of experiences. Therefore, if businesses are focusing on quality of services and marketing communications then customers will be guaranteed to receive good experience. Customers with trust in brands will have repurchase behavior, and the most important thing is customers will be the mediator that spreading information of brands to other customers in forms of Word-of-Mouth and others.

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