



MARKET ORIENTATION, CUSTOMER-BASED BRAND EQUITY, AND ONLINE PURCHASING DECISIONS IN THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

This academic article focuses on the business context of online product distribution in Thailand. The study reveals that a strong market orientation, which emphasizes collaborative efforts among market stakeholders and a deep understanding of evolving customer behaviors, coupled with a vigilant focus on competitors and their activities, positively influences online purchasing decisions. Furthermore, the research highlights the significance of brand management from a customer perspective as a critical factor in the purchasing process. Brand trust, as the customer's confidence in a brand's ability to fulfill its expected functions and responsibilities, is identified as a cornerstone of customer satisfaction, repeat purchase intention, and brand loyalty. Customers tend to exhibit greater trust and loyalty towards brands with a strong and positive reputation. While the constituent elements of trust are not definitively fixed, a review of existing literature suggests an integrated framework of three core components: credibility, integrity, and benevolence. The cultivation of these elements is shown to significantly increase the likelihood of customers' purchasing decisions.

Keywords: Market Orientation ; Customer-Based Brand Equity ; Online Purchasing Decisions

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INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary business landscape, digital media and various forms of online electronic media have become profoundly influential across numerous sectors. This includes industries such as retail, hospitality, food and beverage, airline ticketing, and beauty, among others. These platforms have fundamentally reshaped service delivery, sales, and advertising, enabling businesses to provide customers with more accessible and convenient ways to engage with their products and services. Online marketing now serves as a primary intermediary or platform, effectively connecting with modern consumers. This digital transformation in Thailand has significantly altered Thai consumer behaviors and purchasing decisions, compelling entrepreneurs and marketers to adapt their strategies and advertising approaches accordingly. It is widely acknowledged in the online marketing sphere that keeping pace with evolving internet trends is imperative for the successful execution of marketing and advertising campaigns by companies and organizations, as it offers an unparalleled ability to reach the contemporary populace.

The entrepreneur's digital adaptation are based on the rapid advancements of the Internet in the Industry 4.0 era have catalyzed continuous development, leading to ubiquitous and comprehensive internet coverage. This enhanced accessibility has simplified service engagement for users. Concurrently, a significant shift in consumer behavior has been observed, with a marked preference for purchasing goods and services via online platforms and electronic media—a system known as E-commerce—over traditional brick-and-mortar stores. Data from Thailand's 2019 E-commerce value survey indicates a consistent increase over several years, a trend that was significantly amplified by the COVID-19 crisis. The pandemic ushered

in a "New Normal," characterized by social distancing, which compelled Thais to adopt technology more extensively to minimize physical contact. This led to a surge in mobile internet usage and, consequently, a substantial rise in online transactions (Thanaiudompat, 2023).

In response, businesses have progressively developed their sales channels, leveraging online marketplaces (E-Marketplaces) to allow vendors and shops to present and sell their products. The proliferation of these sales channels has prompted entrepreneurs and business owners to pivot their strategies towards sophisticated brand management. The goal is to systematize business operations and enhance the quality and efficiency of their sales potential. Therefore, it can be asserted that brand management, from a stakeholder's perspective, is crucial for cultivating a strong brand image and fostering a connection with the brand. Current marketing strategies regarding brand utilization in the context of online purchasing are related to the shift in consumer behavior. This, in turn, shapes the perceptual experiences of stakeholders, influencing their brand loyalty and repeat purchase decisions. Consequently, brand equity emerges as a core marketing strategy, pivotal for managing a business in a way that builds consumer trust and confidence in their purchasing decisions (Praphuntha et al., 2025).

This context underscores the importance of the present study, which investigates the interplay between market orientation, branding, and consumers' online purchasing decisions. This academic article will present an analysis and synthesis of variables influencing these decisions, namely market orientation, brand management, and the online purchasing decision process itself. The findings of this research can be utilized to develop a more effective and successful model for brand management from the customer's

viewpoint, further enhancing the synergy between market orientation and consumer online purchasing behavior.

Market orientation, customer-based brand equity and online purchasing decisions the main objectives of this study are (1) to examine the direct influence of market orientation on online purchasing decisions, and (2) to investigate the mediating role of customer-based brand equity in this relationship between market orientation, customer-based brand equity and online purchasing decisions.

The Evolution of Market Orientation

In establishing managerial objectives, a primary emphasis is placed on the strategic use of store brands and promotions. Specifically, out-of-store promotions are intrinsically linked with information dissemination. The deployment of store brands builds a relationship with the consumer, thereby creating an opportunity for manufacturers and retailers to compete head-to-head based on their target demographics (Ailawadi, Neslin & Gedenk, 2001).

Research by Homburg, Wieseke & Bornemann (2009) found that while identifying customer needs is a cornerstone of management philosophy, it is the "Customer Need for Knowledge" (CNK) that is paramount. CNK describes the capability to accurately prioritize customer requirements. The findings from two large-scale, multi-level studies, incorporating data from customers, employees, and managers, demonstrated the critical importance of CNK in achieving customer satisfaction and delivering customer value. Sales personnel who are customer-centric and possess a deep understanding of customer knowledge contribute significantly to the quality of the service provided by the enterprise.

A significant evolution in management thought was highlighted in 1985 when the American Marketing

Association (AMA) revised its definition of marketing. A notable distinction from the previous definition was the diminished emphasis on the concept of exchange. In the new definition, a focus on creating and delivering value through customer relationships superseded the historical importance of the exchange paradigm. This shift was welcomed by scholars who discussed the limitations of the exchange model and the advantages of a value-creation paradigm for the future of management. Consequently, market orientation has been presented in diverse forms, challenging managers to generate work that addresses varied market demands (Sheth & Uslay, 2007).

For the retail sector, Kremer & Viot (2012) assert that managerial activities must prioritize staying current with modern changes. To ensure long-term sustainability and viability as a distributor, businesses must adopt a threefold focus: managerial engagement, customer-centricity, and profit orientation.

The conceptualization of new management doctrines, initiated by leading corporations, often originates from established management principles. These doctrines represent distinct, experience-based principles that provide a comprehensive, organization-wide guide for selecting managerial activities. For instance, a market orientation that influences customer decisions through engagement and a customer-centric focus allows a company to systematically handle dynamic challenges. It provides high-level guidance to all decision-makers within the firm (Challagalla, Murtha, & Jaworski, 2014). Such a market orientation ensures that the company's actions remain coherent yet flexible in a fluid marketplace.

Characteristics of Market Orientation

Based on a comprehensive review and synthesis of existing literature concerning market orientation, three principal components have been identified:

collaborative orientation, customer orientation, and competitor orientation.

Collaborative Orientation in the retail sector, a collaborative orientation involves fostering both Customer Engagement and Employee Engagement to promote a shared dialogue regarding products and services. This approach to sales is dictated by a managerial strategy where its effectiveness is notably amplified in B2B (as opposed to B2C) contexts and within service-based companies (compared to manufacturing firms) (Kumar & Pansari, 2015). Research by Hewett & Krasnikov (2015) indicates that consumer purchasing behavior is influenced by information gathered from product samples prior to making a decision. The quality of the relationship with the buyer acts as a pivotal mechanism in shifting market approaches, particularly under conditions of product complexity. Thus, a strategy of managerial engagement significantly influences consumer purchasing behavior and, by extension, the company's potential performance.

Customer Orientation a customer-centric approach is a cornerstone of market orientation for retail businesses. Consumer engagement is a multifaceted concept, comprising cognitive, emotional, and/or behavioral dimensions, and it plays a critical role in forging lasting, mutually beneficial relationships between a company and its customers. In the online context, consumers can co-create personalized experiences and value by participating in interactive and networking activities with the company. Within this technology-driven framework, consumer engagement programs present invaluable opportunities for proactive companies in online settings (Vinerean, Opreana & Tichindelean, 2014).

For retail enterprises, particularly in sectors like technology, the increasing popularity of mobile phones and applications has enabled many companies to cultivate consumer relationships through these

platforms. It is therefore crucial to understand how to design programs aligned with consumer preferences. A key question is which mobile application features stimulate consumer engagement and lead to their sustained use (Tarute, Nikou & Gatautis, 2017). The findings of Tarute, Nikou, & Gatautis reveal that the perception of features such as design solutions and information quality correlates with higher engagement, which in turn leads to the continued use of the mobile application. Furthermore, consumer engagement directly impacts the user's intention for continued use. Contrary to expectations, interactive and functional features were not found to be significantly associated with consumer engagement with mobile applications.

Competitor Orientation Sciulli & Bebko (2005) discuss a competitor-focused market orientation in the context of social marketing. The objective is to craft messages about social causes that are effective and stimulate behavioral change in consumers. When comparing socially-oriented advertising with profit-oriented advertising, it was found that social-cause ads were more emotionally appealing, while profit-focused ads conveyed more informational content, such as details on price, quality, performance, availability, and warranties. Socially - oriented advertisements, often departing from traditional formats, were more effective at evoking emotions like fear, anger, sadness, disgust, interest, and surprise. Conversely, profit-oriented ads were perceived as more pleasant and had a greater impact on return on investment.

Furthermore, a study by Getz & Petersen (2005) of family business owners in the tourism and hospitality industries across two resort areas (one in Canada, one in Denmark) sought to identify characteristics of growth- and profit-oriented entrepreneurs. Their analysis of owners' attitudes and goals revealed a predominance of lifestyle and autonomy-driven motivations. However, a distinct subgroup was identified with a stronger

commitment to profitability and growth. This subgroup, while small, was present in both locations and was primarily composed of individuals who had purchased their businesses, particularly accommodation and restaurant establishments. In contrast, businesses such as bed & breakfasts and craft shops were more closely associated with lifestyle and independence, reflecting differing approaches to management theory and policy (Getz & Petersen, 2005).

The Evolution of Customer-Based Brand Equity

A review of the existing literature reveals that customer-based brand equity is a paramount variable in brand research. Aaker (1996) defines customer-based brand equity as a set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand's name and symbol, which adds value to a product or service for both the firm and its customers. This aligns with Thanaiudompat (2023) assertion that customer-based brand equity is a powerful force for market success, operating through names, symbols, and logos to generate added value for the product.

Furthermore, Bonyasuwon and Thanaiudompat (2024) research posits that customer-based brand equity helps to create differentiation through brand awareness, which in turn influences the marketing of that product (Seepui et al., 2022). Customer-based brand equity can establish a competitive advantage, improve cash flow for the organization, and ultimately generate wealth for shareholders.

Aaker (1996) identified five core components of customer-based brand equity: Brand Awareness, Brand Association, Perceived Quality, Brand Loyalty, and Other Proprietary Assets (e.g., patents, trademarks). However, this framework is contested by Sakhonkaruhatdej (2020), who argues that brand loyalty is an outcome of customer-based brand equity rather than one of its constituent components.

Research by Cobb-Walgren, Ruble & Donthu (1995) suggests that the management of customer-based brand equity is typically divided into two categories: 1) components related to customer perception, which include awareness, association, and perceived quality, and 2) components related to customer behavior, such as brand loyalty and the willingness to pay a premium price.

It has been found that customer-based brand equity can be measured both directly—through its five components and brand image—and indirectly. A strong brand equity can be inferred from an organization's sales figures and profitability. When customer-based brand equity is conceptualized with four dimensions—brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association, and advertising awareness—it has been shown to have a direct positive impact on both purchase intention and the organization's customer-related performance (Cobb-Walgren, Ruble & Donthu 1995).

Characteristics of Brand Management from the Customer's Perspective

While there are varying perspectives on customer-based brand management, the most frequently cited research on its core components stems (Thanaiudompat, 2023). For instance, research by Christodoulides et al. (2015), referencing Aaker (1996), notes that the elements of brand management, brand awareness, brand associations, and brand loyalty—cannot be distinctly separated. Furthermore, their application is not universally consistent across all countries, and there is no definitive consensus on the constituent elements of brand equity.

This aligns with Thanaiudompat (2023) assertion that brand management facilitates differentiation through brand awareness, which in turn influences the product's marketing strategy (Yoo, Donthu & Lee, 2000). Effective brand management can generate a competitive

advantage, improve cash flow for the organization, and ultimately create wealth for shareholders (Sethuraman & Cole, 1999).

However, conflicting research exists regarding these components. Some studies propose that brand loyalty is an outcome of customer-based brand equity rather than a fundamental component of it. Moreover, although the models by Aaker (1996) and Keller (1993) are widely used for measuring brand equity, there is a recognized need for further research to evaluate brand equity specifically within service industries, such as online travel agencies. These businesses are characterized more by their intangible services than by physical products. The existing models are more frequently applied to tangible goods, where consumers might perceive product quality—a key component of brand equity—through physical cues like packaging, distribution channels, and country of origin. These indicators are incongruent with service-based brands, such as online booking agents or hotels, which lack physical packaging (Krishnan & Hartline, 2001).

Based on a literature review of its constituent parts, the researcher concludes that brand management comprises four primary components:

Brand Awareness: This refers to the recall of a brand, driven by positive customer experience and the recognition of its quality. It is central to creating brand distinction, as well as fostering long-term memory and recall that solidifies the brand's position in the customer's mind (Aaker, 1996).

Perceived Quality: Perceived value in terms of quality is the consumer's subjective judgment of a product or service's overall excellence or superiority in comparison to its competitors (Praphuntha et al., 2025).

Brand Association: This involves building a relationship with the brand through positive feelings, brand recognition, and a strong brand image. It is conveyed through experiences that communicate the

attributes of the brand and the organization. Brand association is crucial for generating awareness and sustaining a long-term competitive advantage (Keller, 2008).

Brand Loyalty: Stemming from a symbol or trademark, brand loyalty is the cornerstone of brand recall and drives long-term repeat purchases. It is the result of a favorable evaluation of the brand's value, which directly impacts the business's sales and profitability (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2008).

The Concept of the Purchase Decision

Historically, researchers and practitioners have implemented various marketing activities, but it was McCarthy's 1960 proposal of the Marketing Mix, or the 4 Ps, that became the most prominent and widely adopted framework. Marketers typically utilize these four variables—Product, Place, Promotion, and Price—to stimulate consumer purchases and shape attitudes towards their brand. The core idea is to blend these elements to create a mutually satisfying relationship with the target market (Mohammed & Pervaiz, 1995). As noted in Culliton's marketing guide, these four foundational elements are interconnected and focused on the "independent consumer." The key to successful marketing is "having the right product at the right price at the right place (and time) with the right promotion." Kotler and Armstrong (2001) define this as "the set of controllable, tactical marketing tools that the firm blends to produce the response it wants in the target market".

Subsequently, Lauterborn suggested viewing the 4 Ps from the consumer's perspective, proposing a corresponding 4 Cs model: Product becomes Customer Solution, Price is Customer Cost, Place translates to Convenience, and Promotion is Communication (Thanaiudompat, 2023).

This research focuses on the causal factors of retail brand equity on purchasing decisions, synthesizing literature related to marketing approaches and the application of the marketing mix. The decision to purchase from a retailer is influenced by stochastic demand, which is based on the store's pricing and advertising. Research examining the pricing and advertising decisions for competing retailers with short-lifecycle products under emergency procurement found that retailers generally prefer to advertise, whether in a single- or dual-channel system. However, this often results in improved prices and stock for the retailer, while overall customer welfare decreases (Liu, Ma & Zhang, 2014).

In this context, Mohammed and Pervaiz (1995) found that using identifiable marketing tools to convey eco-friendly and socially desirable attributes to consumers is crucial for building purchase intentions. The furniture industry serves as a prime example of the opportunities and challenges in expanding green products. In an investigation into how eco-labels and retailer types affect Green Purchasing Intention (GPI), it was found that consumers buying furniture in a supermarket had a lower GPI compared to those at other furniture retailers, *ceteris paribus*. Factors positively influencing GPI include the perceived credibility of the eco-label, a history of green purchasing, and general awareness of green furniture. For retailers, adding green products can increase market opportunities. Therefore, green furniture manufacturers should select reputable retailers to enhance credibility and potentially increase market share (Mohammed & Pervaiz (1995).

The Relationship Between Market Orientation and Online Purchasing Decisions, Mediated by Brand Management

Market orientation exerts both direct and indirect influences on online purchasing decisions, a process mediated by brand management and moderated by customer characteristics.

The researcher conducted a review of empirical literature concerning the relationship between market orientation and consumers' online purchasing decisions. Research by Ashley et al. (2011) highlights the challenges of reaching consumers through market orientation, compelling companies to rely more heavily on relationship marketing strategies to increase customer patronage. However, consumers often try to avoid these relational tactics. Consequently, firms have a vested interest in understanding the factors that drive customer engagement in relationship marketing. Key factors, controlled by the company, include the customer's perception of inconvenience and the anticipated benefits. Generally, customer privacy concerns, engagement levels, and shopping frequency affect the specific actions a company can take to enhance the likelihood of consumer participation in relationship marketing efforts.

Moreover, relationship marketing aims to establish long-term connections with customers. In the context of the consumer goods market, traditional relationship marketing remains an effective tool for developing strong bonds, which helps in building loyalty to private label brands and ensuring the success of store brand extension strategies. This indicates that customer experience, satisfaction, trust, and commitment to a private label are pivotal in fostering customer loyalty to that label for convenience goods. This, in turn, increases consumer preference for purchasing private labels in new categories, such as durable goods. Therefore, building trust and

commitment, which culminates in loyalty, is a strategic objective and a source of long-term profitability for retailers (Sakhonkaruhatdej, 2020).

Additionally, Weisstein et al. (2017) found that positive online reviews influence consumer purchasing decisions, whereas negative reviews impact consumer price perception for online retail products. The effect of negative reviews on price perception and subsequent purchasing behavior was examined, revealing that the proportion of negative comments has a more significant adverse impact on the purchasing decisions of consumers with high purchase goals compared to those without. This research contributes to the body of knowledge on negative online reviews and consumer goals, offering practical implications for online retailers.

A consumer's post-purchase evaluation of an online retailer will be positive if the perceived quality of the product and service aligns with their market-driven expectations. Conversely, consumers will form an immediate negative evaluation if the product or service fails to meet these standards or fulfill their expectations. It is evident that post-purchase evaluation is critical for retailers. Consumers make purchasing decisions after perceiving that a product's quality and service adequately meet their needs. This subsequently leads to recommendations and repeat purchases from loyal customers, who, recognizing the value of the product, advocate for it to potential new customers.

Main argument market orientation influences consumers' online purchasing decisions both directly and indirectly, a relationship mediated by brand management and moderated by customer characteristics. Although direct market orientation outreach is challenging, compelling firms to use relationship marketing, companies must understand the factors, such as perceived inconvenience and anticipated benefits, that drive consumer engagement in relationship marketing efforts, considering customer

privacy and frequency. Traditional relationship marketing remains effective for building long-term loyalty to private label brands, with customer experience, satisfaction, trust, and commitment being key drivers. Furthermore, online reviews significantly impact consumer behavior; positive reviews boost purchases, while negative reviews, especially for consumers with high purchase goals, negatively affect price perception and subsequent decisions. Ultimately, a positive post-purchase evaluation, resulting from product and service quality aligning with market-driven expectations, is critical for retailers as it fosters customer loyalty, leads to repeat purchases, and drives positive recommendations.

SUGGESTION

Business policy recommendations in Thailand should seriously integrate Market Orientation at the policy level. This should not only emphasize gathering customer data and competitor intelligence but also focus on Inter-functional coordination to ensure that this insight is consistently used for product/service creation and improvement. This action will help strengthen Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE), particularly in the dimensions of brand performance and brand imagery, which are crucial for building trust in the online channel. Businesses should invest in big data analytics tools to understand real-time online search and purchasing behavior and utilize this data to deliver a personalized online experience on e-commerce platforms, which is ultimately a key mechanism for driving purchasing decisions.

CONCLUSION

Market orientation is fundamentally about fostering collaboration among market stakeholders and

understanding shifts in customer behavior and the competitive landscape. This orientation positively influences online purchasing decisions through the mediation of brand management, specifically customer-based brand equity.

Brand trust, defined as the customer's willingness to rely on a brand to fulfill its expected functions and responsibilities, is a crucial element. It is a determinant of customer satisfaction, the intention to repurchase,

and the cultivation of brand loyalty. Customers tend to trust and remain loyal to brands with a positive image and a strong reputation. While there is no definitive set of components for trust, a review of existing literature allows for its integration into three core elements: credibility, integrity, and benevolence. The successful cultivation of these elements significantly increases the probability of a customer's decision to purchase.

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