

Loyalty of Food Delivery Service Consumers in Mueang District, Ubon Ratchathani Province

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Abstract

This research aims to 1. study the marketing mix and service quality affecting the loyalty of users of food delivery services in the Muang district of Ubon Ratchathani province, and 2. compare the marketing mix and service quality impacting the loyalty of food delivery service users in the Muang district, categorized by gender, age, occupation, and average monthly income. The sample group consisted of 400 general citizens in the Muang district, Ubon Ratchathani province, using a cluster sampling method. The research tool was a questionnaire. Statistical values used included frequency, percentage, average, standard deviation, multiple regression analysis, t-test, and F-test.

The research findings are as follows:

1. The overall marketing mix was rated highly. When considered in detail, every aspect of the marketing mix was important, ranked from highest to lowest average score: product, distribution channels, price, physical characteristics, processes, promotion, and personnel. The overall service quality was also rated highly. In detail, every aspect of service quality was important, ranked from highest to lowest average score: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. Overall loyalty of the service users was high. When considered in detail, the aspects of loyalty, ranked from highest to lowest average score, were: repeat usage, decision-making process, attitude, customer satisfaction, and perception.

2. The variables of the marketing mix, including product, price, and distribution channels, significantly affected the loyalty of the service users at the 0.05 level. Similarly, the service quality variables, including reliability, assurance, empathy, and tangibles, also significantly affected the loyalty of food delivery service users in the Muang district of Ubon Ratchathani province at the 0.05 level. These seven variables could predict service user loyalty by 63.2%.

3. In comparing the decision-making of consumers who chose food delivery services, categorized by gender, age, occupation, and average monthly income, it was found that service users of different genders and ages had different opinions on empathy. Users with different occupations had varying opinions on reliability, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. Similarly, users with different average monthly incomes had differing opinions on assurance, empathy, reliability, and tangibles.

Keywords: Loyalty of Consumers, Food Delivery Service

Introduction

Towards the end of 2019 (B.E. 2562), the world faced the outbreak of a new disease, the spread of the SARS-CoV2 virus, which caused a global pandemic, including in Thailand. This outbreak, besides directly affecting public health, also devastated the economy. The transmission of this virus occurred in a manner similar to influenza, primarily through respiratory droplets from coughing. Consequently, campaigns were initiated to encourage everyone to wear masks, practice social distancing, avoid touching shared objects, and frequently wash their hands to prevent further spread (The spread of COVID-19 in Thailand, 2022).

Thailand was one of the countries impacted by this global situation. The population nationwide experienced panic about their well-being and lifestyle amidst the spread of this virus. Social gatherings and close social interactions were avoided. As the situation evolved, the government implemented legal measures to control and prevent the spread of the virus, including travel restrictions and prohibitions on dining in at restaurants. Consequently, businesses had to adapt for survival by utilizing online food delivery services to maintain continuous operations. Online food ordering applications thus played a significant role in supporting various businesses. This situation provided an opportunity for companies to act as intermediaries between restaurants and consumers, leading to an increased emphasis on marketing online food delivery services. The advent of food delivery services through smartphone applications emerged as a crucial development during this period (Pinsamran, Suwakulsiri, and Juntarathane, 2022).

Due to the aforementioned reasons, there has been an interest in studying the "Loyalty of Food Delivery Service Consumers in Mueang District, Ubon Ratchathani Province." This research is anticipated to benefit delivery business operators or those interested in distribution channels. The findings could be used to inform decision-making processes and assist in strategizing future marketing plans.

Objective

1. To study the marketing mix and service quality that affect the loyalty of food delivery service users in the Mueang District of Ubon Ratchathani Province.
2. To compare the marketing mix and service quality that influence the loyalty of food delivery service users in the Mueang District of Ubon Ratchathani Province, categorized by demographic characteristics such as gender, age, occupation, average monthly income, and level of education.

Literature Review

The 7Ps of Marketing Mix, as outlined by Kotler and Keller (2016), comprise of seven components:

- 1.Product: Refers to goods and services, including core and supplementary products, representing the benefits customers seek for competitive advantage, fulfilling customer satisfaction and user needs.
- 2.Price: The cost incurred, whether in terms of money or time, including the effort in purchasing and using the service.

3.Place: Decisions regarding the delivery of services to customers, including the time and location of delivery, and distribution channels, both physical and electronic.

4.Promotion: Activities designed to create incentives and marketing communications to generate customer satisfaction.

5.People: All personnel involved in delivering services, impacting customer perceptions of service quality.

6.Physical Evidence: The environment where the service is provided, tangible components like décor, ambiance, equipment, service personnel, which help communicate service quality.

7.Process: Necessary operations and procedures in serving customers, involving design and implementation for effective outcomes.

Service Quality, as defined by Gronroos (1990), occurs during interactions between consumers and service employees, products, or systems of the service provider. Quality services should be flawless, understanding and responding to consumer needs (Kitapci, Akdogan, & Dortyol, 2014). Service quality measures include:

1. Tangibles: Physical aspects of the service environment perceivable through the five senses, such as decor, atmosphere, equipment, and service personnel.

2. Reliability: The quality of delivering services as promised, correctly meeting objectives. Failure to do so diminishes consumer trust and loyalty.

3. Responsiveness: The ability to respond to consumer needs promptly and willingly, showing problem-solving and assistance.

4. Assurance: Involving knowledge and skills to instill consumer confidence.

5. Empathy: Personalized care and attention to consumers before, during, and after the service, catering to their unique needs.

Loyalty, according to Skogland & Siguaw (2004), is the commitment between the service provider and the consumer, characterized by regular and happy patronage, leading to a positive relationship and intent to return. Brand Loyalty, as conceptualized by Oliver (1999), has four stages:

1.Cognitive Loyalty: Awareness and understanding of the brand's attributes and benefits.

2. Affective Loyalty: Emotional preference or aversion towards the brand.

3. Conative Loyalty: The intent to purchase or trial buying behavior.

4. Action Loyalty: The final stage where consumers repeatedly purchase the product.

Conceptual Framework

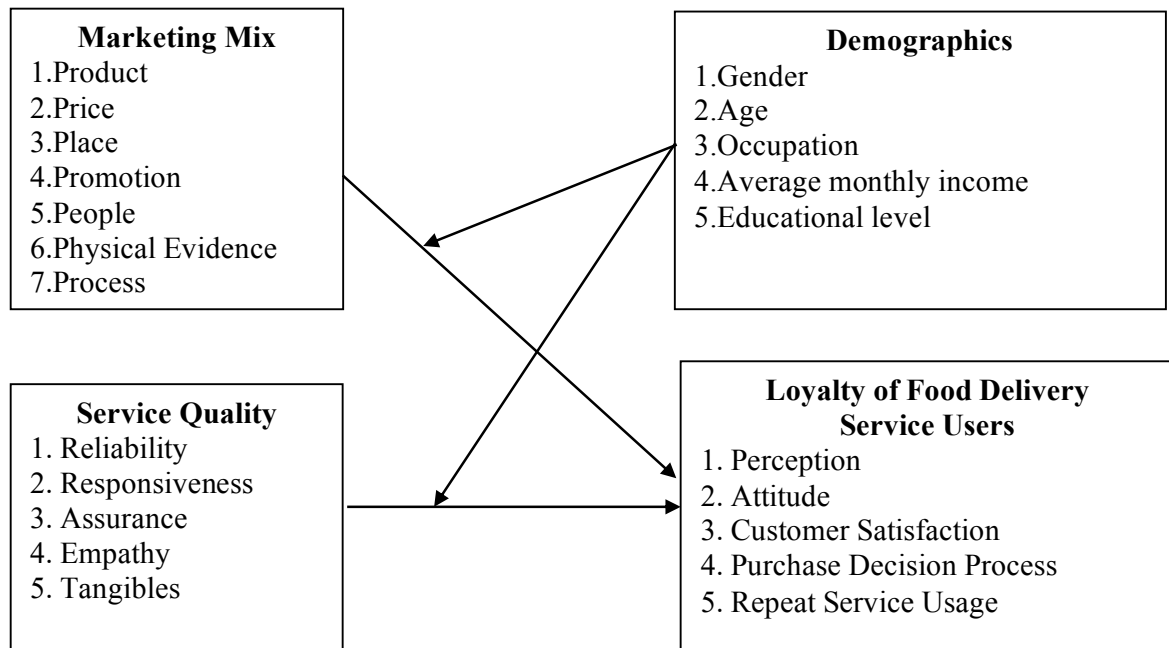


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

Population and Sample

The population for this study consisted of the general public in Mueang District, Ubon Ratchathani Province. A sample size of 400 people was determined using Cochran's formula (1977), employing a cluster sampling method. The respondents were individuals who had previously used a food delivery application, surveyed during March-April 2023 (B.E. 2566).

Research Tools

The research tool was a questionnaire, validated for content accuracy by three experts and analyzed for Item Objective Congruence index (IOC) (Tirakanant, 2007). The IOC values ranged from .60 to 1.00. The instrument's reliability was tested on a population of 30 individuals similar to but not part of the sample group, resulting in a reliability coefficient of .963.

Data Collection

Data for this study was collected using quantitative research methods. The researcher personally gathered data from residents in the Mueang District, Ubon Ratchathani Province, using the questionnaire.

Data Analysis and Statistical Methods

Data were analyzed using computer software for frequency distribution and percentage of general information about the sample group, categorized into five levels.

The differences in mean values were tested using the t-test for two-sample groups and One-Way ANOVA, with F-test for groups of three or more. If statistically significant, pairwise comparisons were made using Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) method. The

statistics used in data analysis included percentage, mean score, standard deviation (S.D.), and F-test.

Research Findings

1. General Analysis Results of Food Delivery Service Users

The study and analysis of data from a survey on food delivery services in Mueang District, Ubon Ratchathani Province, found that out of the total 400 respondents, the majority were female, constituting 227 individuals or 56.75%. The predominant age group was 20-30 years, making up 62.25%. The majority were students, accounting for 63.75%. Most had an average monthly income of no more than 10,000 Baht, representing 56.25%. The highest level of education for most respondents was a bachelor's degree, comprising 64.75%.

2. Analysis Results on the Opinion Levels Regarding the 7P's Marketing Mix Factors:

Table 1 Mean and Standard Deviation Values Summarizing the Aspects of the 7P's Marketing Mix, Service Quality, and Loyalty of Users.

7P's Marketing Mix	\bar{X}	S.D.	Important level
1.Product	4.28	.439	Much
2.Price	4.12	.517	Much
3.Place	4.19	.479	Much
4.Promotion	3.98	.558	Much
5.People	3.93	.618	Much
6.Physical Evidence	4.07	.481	Much
7.Process	4.05	.520	Much
Total	4.09	.369	Much
Service Quality			
1. Reliability	3.97	.528	Much
2. Responsiveness	3.96	.559	Much
3. Assurance	3.93	.561	Much
4. Empathy	3.92	.583	Much
5. Tangibles	3.92	.546	Much
Total	3.94	.461	Much
Loyalty of Service Users			
1. Perception	3.92	.586	Much
2. Attitude	3.96	.588	Much
3. Customer Satisfaction	3.95	.538	Much
4. Purchase Decision Process	4.04	.546	Much
5. Repeat Service Usage	4.12	.538	Much
Total	4.00	.459	Much

From Table 1, the 7P's Marketing Mix overall is at a high level. Upon detailed consideration, it is found that every aspect of the 7P's Marketing Mix is very important, ranked in descending order of average value: Product, Distribution Channel, Price, Physical Evidence, Process, Promotion, and People.

Service Quality, overall, is also at a high level. Each aspect of service quality is very important, ranked in descending order of average value: Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy, and Tangibles.

The Loyalty of Service Users overall is at a high level. When considering individual aspects, the loyalty of food delivery service users in the Mueang District of Ubon Ratchathani Province is ranked in descending order of average value: Repeat Service Usage, Purchase Decision Process, Attitude, Customer Satisfaction, and Perception.

3. Analysis of the Impact of Marketing Mix and Service Quality on the Loyalty of Food Delivery Service Users in Mueang District, Ubon Ratchathani Province

Based on the first objective, to study the marketing mix and service quality affecting the loyalty of food delivery service users in the Mueang District of Ubon Ratchathani Province, the findings are as presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Multiple Regression Analysis of the Marketing Mix and Service Quality Impacting the Loyalty of Food Delivery Service Users in Mueang District, Ubon Ratchathani Province.

Predictor		Unstandardized		Standardized	t	p
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Product	.098	.037	.093	2.606	.010**
2	Price	-.093	.033	-.104	-2.767	.006**
3	Place	.093	.041	.097	2.251	.025*
4	Promotion	.067	.038	.081	1.771	.077
5	People	-.038	.035	-.052	-1.084	.279
6	Physical Evidence	.072	.045	.076	1.607	.109
7	Process	-.046	.041	-.053	-1.131	.259
8	Reliability	.148	.045	.017	3.279	.001**
9	Responsiveness	.082	.042	.100	1.935	.054
10	Assurance	.120	.040	.147	3.044	.002**
11	Empathy	.153	.037	.193	4.138	.000**
12	Tangibles	.233	.040	.277	5.804	.000**
n = 400, Constant = .458, R = .802, R ² = .643, R ² _{adj} = .632, F = 58.058, Sig = 0.00						

From Table 2, the marketing mix variables of the 7P's, including Product, Price, and Distribution Channels, significantly impact the loyalty of food delivery service users in the Mueang District of Ubon Ratchathani Province at the 0.05 level. Similarly, service quality variables such as Reliability, Assurance, Empathy, and Tangibles also affect the loyalty of food delivery service users in the Mueang District at the 0.05 significance level. These variables have a predictive power of 63.2% and can be used to formulate a predictive equation as follows:

Raw Equation Regression:

$$Y = 0.458 + .098 (\text{Product}) - .093 (\text{Price}) + .093 (\text{Distribution Channel}) + .148 (\text{Reliability}) + .120 (\text{Assurance}) + .153 (\text{Empathy}) + .233 (\text{Tangibles})$$

Standard Score Regression Equation:

$$Z = + .093 (\text{Product}) - .104 (\text{Price}) + .097 (\text{Distribution Channel}) + .017 (\text{Reliability}) + .147 (\text{Assurance}) + .193 (\text{Empathy}) + .277 (\text{Tangibles})$$

From the second objective, to compare the loyalty of food delivery service users in Mueang District, Ubon Ratchathani Province, categorized by demographic characteristics including gender, age, occupation, average monthly income, and education level, it was found that:

1. Food delivery service users in Mueang District, Ubon Ratchathani Province, of different genders have significantly different opinions at the 0.05 level regarding the aspect of empathy.
2. Users of different ages have significantly different opinions at the 0.05 level regarding empathy.
3. Users of different occupations have significantly different opinions at the 0.05 level regarding reliability, assurance, empathy, and tangibles.
4. Users with different average monthly incomes have significantly different opinions at the 0.01 level regarding assurance and empathy. Additionally, there are significant differences at the 0.05 level in opinions on reliability and tangibles.

Discussion

From the research on the loyalty of food delivery service users in Mueang District, Ubon Ratchathani Province, there are interesting points for discussion as follows:

1. The Product Aspect significantly affects the loyalty of food delivery service users in Mueang District, Ubon Ratchathani Province. An interesting point is that the application features reputable and trustworthy restaurants. The research indicates that users consider products from applications featuring well-known, reliable restaurants with a variety of appealing options. The exact match of ordered products to the app's descriptions also impacts loyalty, aligning with Hongyont's (2019) study on factors influencing online purchase decisions and Pinijchop's (2017) research on factors affecting e-commerce entrepreneurs' satisfaction with transportation services in Bangkok.

2. The Price Aspect impacts the loyalty of food delivery users in Mueang District, Ubon Ratchathani Province. Key points include reasonable delivery fees and various discounts offered by the application. Research shows that users consider the appropriateness of delivery fees and discounts, leading to perceived value and loyalty. This is consistent with Mekarun's (2017) findings on the influence of price factors on consumer behavior for ready-to-wear fashion and Sathienchok's (2017) study on factors affecting consumer satisfaction with Lazada online purchases in Thailand.

3. The Distribution Channel Aspect affects the loyalty of food delivery service users in Mueang District, Ubon Ratchathani Province. Noteworthy points include the application's layout, imagery, pricing, speed, and accuracy of delivery, and a wide variety of restaurant choices. The research indicates that user-friendly applications with clear, appealing images and detailed information enhance customer convenience and loyalty, in line with Panyana & Sapsanguanboon's (2019) study on factors affecting decision-making in Thai food delivery and Tularak's (2020) research on factors influencing consumers' choice towards food delivery applications in Bangkok.

4. The Reliability Aspect influences the loyalty of food delivery service users in Mueang District, Ubon Ratchathani Province. The highest average scores were given for confidence in the application and knowledgeable service staff providing advice. This finding suggests that service reliability, including the reputation and variety of restaurants and the accuracy of order fulfillment, enhances loyalty. It aligns with Sombultawae's (2018) study on service quality factors affecting repurchasing decisions in food products via the Food

Panda application and Buakaew's (2018) research on service usage behavior, quality, and efficiency affecting repeat usage between Kerry Express and Thailand Post.

5. The Assurance Aspect plays a role in the loyalty of food delivery service users in Mueang District, Ubon Ratchathani Province. The top-rated factors include polite and respectful service staff, accurate billing, and well-packaged food delivery. This finding suggests that assurance in service quality, including courteous behavior and accurate service delivery, fosters customer loyalty. This is consistent with Sombultawae's (2018) research on service quality factors influencing repurchasing decisions in food products via the Food Panda application and Aroonlert & Kosakarika's (2022) study on service quality factors affecting customer satisfaction and repurchase in the Food Panda application.

6. The Empathy Aspect influences the loyalty of food delivery service users in Mueang District, Ubon Ratchathani Province. High scores were given for attentive and willing service, enthusiasm in service delivery, and thorough response to customer queries. The research indicates that empathetic service, including attentive and caring behavior, impacts customer satisfaction and loyalty, aligning with Jantaraprawat & Napompech's (2019) study on service quality satisfaction in parcel transportation service of Thailand Post affecting loyalty behavior of online selling business in the central region.

Suggestion

Suggestions for Utilizing the Research Results:

1. Product Aspect: Users value the reputation and credibility of restaurants. Hence, entrepreneurs should communicate through online media about the quality and reliability of their food and involve celebrities in promoting their restaurants.

2. Price Aspect: Although users prefer food delivery services, they consider reasonable delivery fees. Entrepreneurs should negotiate with application administrators to reduce fees to encourage more food purchases.

3. Distribution Channel Aspect: Users prioritize delivery time and the accuracy of delivery coordinates. Entrepreneurs should ensure clear terms and information in the application for efficient delivery.

4. Reliability Aspect: Users trust the reliability of applications. Entrepreneurs should choose trustworthy applications with a large customer base.

5. Assurance Aspect: Users value polite service staff who avoid using coarse language. Entrepreneurs should select employees who are willing to provide service, polite, and able to solve problems intelligently without using force or emotion. Training in service aspects is also essential, and the courteousness of the staff should be publicized online.

6. Empathy Aspect: Users appreciate attentive and willing service. Entrepreneurs should choose employees who are naturally caring and willing to serve customers. Performance evaluations focusing on customer care should be conducted, with results disseminated online to highlight their attentive service.

7. Tangibles Aspect: Users pay attention to clear and distinct signage and symbols in the application. Entrepreneurs should focus on designing distinctive and memorable logos and symbols for their business.

Suggestions for Future Research:

1. Study the characteristics of logos that influence purchasing decisions in the applications of users in Ubon Ratchathani Province.
2. Research the personality of employees that influence purchasing decisions in the applications of users in Ubon Ratchathani Province.
3. Investigate online marketing factors that influence the decision to purchase products in the applications of users in Ubon Ratchathani Province.

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