Causal Model of Brand Loyalty for Fitness Business in Bangkok

by

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Abstract

The objective of this study were on 1) to study the influence of factors influencing brand loyalty in the fitness business in Bangkok 2) to study the influence of brand loyalty on fitness brands in Bangkok 3) to develop a causal model for brand loyalty in the fitness business in Bangkok. This research was used mixed methods analysis both in qualitative and quantitative methods. The questionnaire was used to collecting the data from persons using fitness services in Bangkok with 400 samples. The data were analyzed by using structural equation model (SEM). The research found that most of the men are from 30 to 39 years old. Is a private company employee. Average monthly income 30,001- 40,000 Baht Master's degree and use the fitness service on weekdays (Monday - Friday) time at 06.01 PM. go to up and above for 6 months membership. The average cost is from 301 - 500 Baht, with experience 3 to 4 years. The hypothesis test found that Direct Experiences, Service Quality, Exercise Commitment, have significant direct effect to Brand Awareness , Brand Association and Brand Loyalty and have indirect effect by Brand Awareness and Brand Association have significant direct effect to Brand Loyalty which is a statistically significant influence on the level of .01.

Keywords: Brand Loyalty, Brand Awareness, Brand Association, Fitness Business

1. Introduction

The fitness business is a service business that associates with exercising and, nowadays, this type of business rapidly grows. According to the 2015 Physical Activity Survey of National Statistical Office, collecting the data during March – April 2015 from 55,920 households, it was found that 12.90 million people of the populations aged 15 and over play sports/do exercise, divided into 7.21 million men and 5.69 million women or 55.9% and 44.1%, respectively. Among the populations aged 25 – 44 years, this group plays sports/does exercise (41.8%). In 2015, the large fitness brand conquered the market in Thailand for 90%. Regarding the evaluation of the fitness market in this year, the value is approximately THB 9,000 million with the 9-10% of growing rate and 1,000 registered places. However, there are only 4 largest brands that have branches around the country, which are Fitness First, Virgin Active, True Fitness, and V Fitness. The total branches of each are more than 40 while the vast investment is 90% of the marketing value. The other 900 branches belong to the local investors (Bangkokbiznews,2017). Regarding the reference of Department of Business Development, Ministry of Commerce, it was revealed that the total revenue of the fitness center business in the year 2016 amounts THB 3,572 million of 127 companies that submitted the financial statement; moreover, the industry earn THB 512 million of net profit, a higher number of the previous year. Meanwhile, the overall industry reaches THB 91 million of net loss. Although the profit increases as compared to the number of those who submitted the financial

statement, it was found that, in 2015, there are 335 companies with the revenue amounting over THB 4.400 million. In consequence, the smaller number demonstrates the violent competition of this industry (Brandinside.asia, 2017). On the contrary, while the major companies reduce but the health trend still increases in Thailand, it results in the abundance of alternative fitness. In 2015, 324 small fitness business, or those with the assets not over THB 50 million, submitted the financial statement to Department of Business Development causing the overall industry of fitness centers is progressed by the small business.

The concept of brand equity has become an increasingly important component in determining the marketing strategies of companies. Many fitness centers may have a brand equity that is attributable to one of the brand components (such as logo, position, size, and attractiveness) in the view of their members. However, the brand management can lead to a better understanding of the factors that affect the brand equity (Gladden and Funk, 2001). Focusing on brand equity can also help reduce the issues of member retention and income fluctuation of the fitness centers. In addition, adding value to the brand equity can increase consumer loyalty towards the brand instead of the product (such as exercising) represented by the brand, which will provide the brand a longer life as the trend in products and services changes rapidly in the business world. Aaker (1991, 1993) and Keller (1993) argued that brand equity leads to slower marketing performance of competitors and lessens the need for elastic response. Benefits of brand equity can solve different problems that fitness centers are facing. Brand equity makes potential members of fitness centers feel confident when making a purchase. Moreover, brand equity also enhances consumer satisfaction with products as well as makes the marketing strategies of fitness centers more effective and able to solve problems. Keller (1993) said that companies with higher brand equity may also obtain benefits in other areas, such as maximizing profits and minimizing production costs. Brand equity can enhance the fitness center's ability to set high prices for its products and services. In addition, the brand equity also allows the fitness centers to use a recognized brand name in a variety of products, which is known as brand extension.

For this research, the author wants to study and focuses on the influence of the factors affecting the loyalty and the influence of brand loyalty in the fitness center business in Bangkok which led to the scope of the research as seen in figure 1.
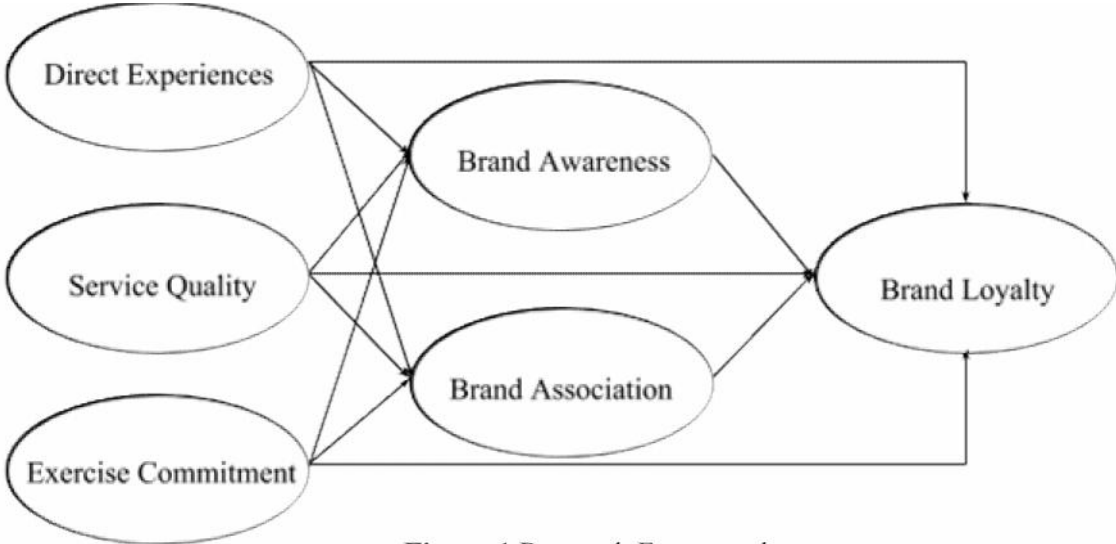
Figure 1 Research Framework

2. Objectives

1.To study the influence of factors affecting the loyalty and the influence of brand loyalty in the fitness center business in Bangkok.

2. To develop a casual model of brand loyalty building of the fitness center business in Bangkok.

3. Literature Review

Direct experience refers to an event that involves a person in a personal manner resulting from a confrontation and way of life through things (Bo Edvardsson, Bo Enquist, Robert Johnston, (2010). It is an experience that provides sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and relational values. Direct experience in consumer's decisions toward feelings, thoughts, actions, and relationships (Schmitt, 1999; Pine and Gilmore, 1999; Brakus, J. Josko., Schmitt, B. H. and L. Zarantonello , 2009; Keng and Ching-Jui,2013) consists of the following elements is 1) Sensitive 2) Cognitive 3) Affective 4) Active and 5) Relational.

Service quality means the quality of service that is over or meets the expectations of the customers (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1985) resulting from the overall evaluation of such service based on perception. According to the results of the study, the evaluation of service quality based on consumer perception is in the form of comparison of attitudes towards expected and perceived services that are consistent each other (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1985). According to Zeithaml et al. (1990), the definition of service quality in each dimension has the following elements is 1) Empathy 2) Assurance 3) Responsiveness 4) Reliability and 5) Tangible.

Exercise commitment means a mental feeling that represents the desire and willingness to continue participating in such activity (Scanlan and Lewthwaite, 1984; Scanlan, Carpenter, Schmidt, Simons, and Keeler, 1993). It is based on the Sport Commitment Model (SCM) that consists of the following components is 1) Sport Enjoyment 2) Involvement Opportunities 3) Involvement Alternatives 4) Social Constraints and 5) Involvement Opportunities.

Brand awareness means that consumers can recognize or recall a brand or its symbol linking to the trust or confidence with reasonable quality , which is why consumers decide to buy products or services. It may include customer experience obtained from services or discussions. A brand recognized by target customers with good quality is more selected than those consumers have never known before (Keller, 1993; and Aaker, 1996). Brand awareness consists of the following components is 1) Brand Recognition and 2) Brand Recall.

Brand association means that things in the memory of consumers are associated with a brand resulting from their feelings and attitudes (Keller, 1993; and Aaker, 1991). This association creates the brand meaning in the thought of consumers. It consists of the following components is 1) Product Attribute 2) Benefit and 3) Brand Attitude (Alexandris et al., 2008).

Brand loyalty means the behavioral and attitudinal loyalty. The frequency and number of times that customers buy a brand represent how they see the brand as something special or favorite (Aaker, 1991; Zeithaml Et al., 1996; and Oliver, 1999). It consists of the following components is 1) Price Sensitivity 2) Word of Mouth and 3) Repurchase.

4. Methodology

The data collection in this research, the author studied ideas, theories, and literature reviews from the primary data sources by researching books, textbooks, journals, researching documents, and electronic documents in Thailand and foreign countries. The literature review to find the related variables from the online database of Sripatum University and collected data by the questionnaire. The populations were fitness users in Bangkok for 400 persons, selected by the multi-stage sampling method. This is a mixed research containing qualitative study and quantitative study with Structural Equation Modeling which is a statistical technique to test the casual relationship. To achieve the objectives, Statistics used in data analysis were divided into three parts as follows is :

1) Descriptive statistics were used to explain or describe the conditions or characteristics of the distribution of variables according to the group characteristics and measured as percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The researcher analyzed these basic statistics for 23 observed variables to explain or describe the characteristics of their distribution as mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis using software package. In addition, the researcher also tested the hypothesis of skewness and kurtosis to see if it was different from zero through Z-test. If observed variables were distributed as normal, SK would be 0 (SK = 0), which means that variables were distributed as a normal curve. If observed variables were distributed in left, SK would be less than 0 (SK < 0) or data of most variables had high mean scores. Finally, if observed variables were distributed in right, SK would be more than 0 (SK > 0) or data of most variables had low mean scores. In addition, in case of normal distribution curve, KU would be 3 indicating that it was mesokurtic normal distribution curve or frequency distribution curve with medium height. On the other hand, if KU was more than 3, it was leptokurtic distribution curve or frequency distribution curve with high height, while if KU was less than, it was platykurtic distribution curve or frequency distribution curve with low height.

2) Correlation analysis statistics were used to determine the relationship between variables by analyzing the Pearson correlation coefficients. With these statistics, the researcher could know the relationship between variables whether there was a linear relationship as well as could identify the direction of the relationship (positive or negative) and the size of the relationship. These data were then used as a basis for analyzing a causal model to build brand loyalty of the fitness centers in Bangkok. The level or magnitude of the relationship was indicated by correlation coefficient. If correlation coefficient was close to -1 or 1, it indicated high relationship level. If correlation coefficient was close to 0, it indicated low relationship level or none.

3) Model analysis statistics were used to analyze structural equation model and causal model to build brand loyalty of the fitness centers in Bangkok investigated in this study. Theories and research relating to variables were developed as research framework and model that involved the empirical data with LISREL for Windows Version 8.80 in order to examine the model fit to empirical data. The research assessed the model fit using Chi-Square, ^{2}/df, CFI, GFI, AGFI, RMSEA, and SRMR. The criteria to examine the model fit to empirical data can be explained as follows.

(1) Chi-Square (^{2}-test) is a test statistic that is widely used to test that the fit function is actually zero according to the hypothesis and to examine the model fit to empirical data. If Chi-Square is significant, the model and empirical data do not fit each other.

(2) Comparative Chi-Square (^{2}/df) should be less than 2.00 indicating that the model fits to empirical data

(3) Comparative Fit Index (CFI) should be 0.90 or higher indicating that the model has a comparative fit

(4) Absolute Fit Index that is widely used and also was used by the researcher are Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), which indicates the amount of variance and covariance explained by the model, and Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), which indicates the amount of variance and covariance explained by the model adjusted by degree of freedom. In general, GFI and AGFI are between 0 and 1 and acceptable GFI and AGFI should be more than 0.90

(5) Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is the statistic used to test the hypothesis. Good RMSEA should be less than 0.05. RMSEA between 0.05 to 0.08 means that the model quite fits to empirical data, between 0.08 to 0.10 means that the model slightly fits to empirical data, and more than 0.10 means that the model does not fit to empirical data.

(6) Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) was used in this study as standardized residual index. This residual is divided by the estimated standard error and should be less than 0.05 to conclude that the model fits to empirical data.

If the research model did not fit to empirical data, the researcher was required to modify the model until the research model fits to empirical data.

5. Results

According to the research, most of the sample group is men aged 30 – 39, employees of a private company, and earn THB 30,001 – 40,000. Most graduated with a master degree. They use the fitness service in the business days (Monday-Friday) from 18.01. They are six-month members and pay around THB 301 – 500, with 3 – 4 years of experiences. In regards to the analysis of the casual factor in building the brand loyalty of the fitness business in Bangkok, details are as follows:

1) The overall direct-experience is at the high level with the mean at 3.99 and S.D. at 0.305. Especially for the behavior aspect and the feeling aspect, the means are 4.14 and 4.08 and S.D. are 0.488 and 0.539, which are respectively at the high level.

2) The service quality consists of the followings: the overall expectation of service quality is at the high level with the mean at 4.06 and S.D. at 0.215 while responsiveness has the mean at 4.16 and S.D. at 0.433. For the perception of service quality, its overview is at the high level with the mean at 4.12 and S.D. at 0.217, especially the responsiveness has the mean at 4.19 and S.D. at 0.434 or at the high level. For the evaluation of satisfaction towards the service quality by the service users, it was found that the difference between the mean of expectation and the perception of service quality in overall is positive. Therefore, for the physical characteristics of service, the mean of perception is higher than the expectation's for 0.04 as the service users are satisfied with the service quality which refers to the eye-catching of the fitness' physical appearance with the mean of perception higher than the expectation for 0.11. As for the credibility of service, the mean of perception is higher than the expectation for 0.09. It was discovered that the users are satisfied with the service quality which is the fitness provides good service since the first time of use; the mean of perception is higher than the expectation for 0.16. As the mean of responsiveness is higher than the expectation's for 0.03, it was founded that the users are satisfied with the service quality which is the fitness responses to their demand; the mean of perception is higher than the expectation for 0.10. As

the mean of service confidence is higher than the expectation's for 0.07, it was founded that the users are satisfied with the service quality which refers to the behavior of the fitness's officers build confidence to customers; the mean of perception is higher than the expectation's for 0.21. For the mean of empathy that is higher than the expectation's for 0.09, it was founded that the users are satisfied with the service quality which is the service time gives convenience to the customers; the mean of perception is higher than the expectation for 0.18.

3) According to the commitment of exercising, the overview is at the high level with the mean at 4.04 and S.D. at 0.290, especially in personal investment with the mean at 4.18 and S.D. at 0.532, and entertainment with the mean at 4.12 and S.D. at 0.536; the two results are respectively at the high level. In terms of the brand awareness, the overview is at the high level with the mean at 4.11 and S.D. at 0.332, especially in brand recall with the mean at 4.16 and S.D. at 0.471, and brand recognition with the mean at 4.05 and S.D. at 0.398; the two results are respectively at the high level. In terms of brand connection, the overall result is at the high level with the mean at 4.03 and S.D. at 0.307, especially in utilities with the mean at 4.10 and S.D. at 0.457, qualifications with the mean at 4.03 and S.D. at 0.454, and brand's attitude with the mean at 3.95 and S.D. at 0.521; the three results are respectively at the high level. In terms of brand loyalty, the overview is at the high level with the mean at 4.14 and S.D. at 0.341, especially in repeat purchase with the mean at 4.18 and S.D. at 0.519, and price sensitivity with the mean at 4.14 and S.D. at 0.507; both are respectively at the high level.

The analysis of the causal effects on the brand awareness (BAWAR), brand association (BASSO), and brand loyalty (BLOYA) was conducted to answer the research questions and hypotheses. The researcher presented the results of direct effect (DE), indirect effects (IE), and total effects (TE) in the relationship model between (1) direct experience (DIEXP), (2) service quality (SQUAL), and (3) exercise commitment (ECOMM) and (1) brand awareness (BAWAR), (2) brand association (BASSO), and (3) brand loyalty (BLOYA) as seen in table 1

Table 1 The analysis of the causal effects on the Brand Awareness (BAWAR), Brand Association (BASSO), and Brand Loyalty (BLOYA)

Causal Effect	DIEXP			SQUAL			ECOMM			BAWAR		
	TE	IE	DE	TE	IE	DE	TE	IE	DE	TE	IE	DE
BAWAR	0.48	-	0.48	0.36	-	0.36	0.22	-	0.22	-	-	-
SE	0.06	-	0.06	0.06	-	0.06	0.04	-	0.04	-	-	-
T	7.81	-	7.81	6.33	-	6.33	5.48	-	5.84	-	-	-
BASSO	0.56	0.34	0.22	0.47	0.26	0.22	0.08	-0.01	0.09	0.70	-	-
SE	0.06	0.06	0.11	0.05	0.06	0.69	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.11	-	-
T	9.60	5.27	6.60	8.59	4.54	3.19	2.02	-1.33	2.36	6.60	-	-
BLOYA	0.56	0.12	0.41	0.53	0.09	0.44	0.11	0.06	0.17	0.26	-	0.26
SE	0.06	0.04	0.07	0.06	0.04	0.06	0.03	0.02	0.036	0.09	-	0.09
T	9.04	3.02	5.61	9.26	2.57	7.85	3.31	2.55	4.17	2.97	-	2.97

According to the table 1 the analysis hypotheses and empirical data, the model fitted with the empirical data and direct and indirect effects could be explained as follows.

1) According to the study, direct experience (DIEXP), service quality (SQUAL), exercise commitment (ECOMM), and brand awareness (BAWAR) could explain the change in brand loyalty (BLOYA) at 100.0 percent. Brand loyalty (BLOYA) was directly influenced by direct experience (DIEXP) with a direct effect size of 0.41 and statistical significance at 0.05, by service quality (SQUAL) with a direct effect size of 0.44 and statistical significance at 0.05, by exercise commitment (ECOMM) with a direct effect size of 0.17 and statistical significance at 0.05, and by brand awareness (BAWAR) with a direct effect size of 0.26 and statistical significance at 0.05. In addition, brand loyalty (BLOYA) was also indirectly influenced by direct experience (DIEXP) and service quality (SQUAL) through brand awareness (BAWAR) with an indirect effect size of 0.12 and 0.09, respectively, and statistical significance at 0.05.

2) According to the study, direct experience (DIEXP), service quality (SQUAL), and exercise commitment (ECOMM) could explain the change in brand association (BASSO) at 100.0 percent. Brand association (BASSO) was directly influenced by direct experience (DIEXP) with a direct effect size of 0.22 and statistical significance at 0.05, by service quality (SQUAL) with a direct effect size of 0.26 and statistical significance at 0.05, and by exercise commitment (ECOMM) with a direct effect size of 0.09 and statistical significance at 0.05. In addition, brand association (BASSO) was also indirectly influenced by direct experience (DIEXP) and service quality (SQUAL) through brand awareness (BAWAR) with an indirect effect size of 0.34 and 0.26, respectively, and statistical significance at 0.05; and

3) According to the study, direct experience (DIEXP), service quality (SQUAL), and exercise commitment (ECOMM) could explain the change in brand awareness (BAWAR) at 78.0 percent. Brand awareness (BAWAR) was directly influenced by direct experience (DIEXP) with a direct effect size of 0.48 and statistical significance at 0.05, by service quality (SQUAL) with a direct effect size of 0.36 and statistical significance at 0.05, and by exercise commitment (ECOMM) with a direct effect size of 0.22 and statistical significance at 0.05.

Therefore, in developing a causal model to build brand loyalty in the fitness centers in Bangkok, the research conducted a synthesis and analysis of data in the literature review and created a model that could be used to build brand loyalty in the fitness centers in Bangkok.

According to the analysis of the factor loading values of the observed variables, they were all positive ranging from 0.54 to 0.93 as well as were all different from zero at a statistical significance of .01 (t > 2.575). The observed variables with highest factor loading value were brand recognition (BRECOG4), brand recall (BRECAL4), and brand awareness (BAWAR) with a factor loading value of 0.93.

The observed variables with lowest factor loading value were service empathy (EMPAT2) and service quality (SQUAL) with a factor loading value of 0.54. The reliability coefficients of all observed variables (R^2) indicating the covariance of the external observed variables in terms of direct experience (DIEXP) and exercise commitment (ECOMM) ranged from 0.54 to 0.88 and in terms of brand awareness (BAWAR) and brand loyalty (BLOYA) ranged from 0.74 - 0.93. When individually considering the standard factor loading values (Beta), it was found that:

1) For direct experience (DIEXP), the variable with the highest factor loading value was perception (AFFEC1) with a standard factor loading value of 0.81 and the covariance with direct experience (DIEXP) at 65.0 percent, followed by emotion (COGNI1) with a standard factor loading value of 0.74 and the covariance with direct experience (DIEXP) at 54.0 percent. The variable with

the lowest standard factor loading value was behavior (ACTIV1) with a standard factor loading value of 0.63 and the covariance with direct experience (DIEXP) at 40.0 percent.

2) For service quality (SQUAL), the variables with the highest factor loading value were service assurance (ASSUR2) and service reliability (RELIA2) with a standard factor loading value of 0.82 and the covariance with service quality (SQUAL) at 74.0 and 75.0 percent, respectively, followed by service tangibility (TANGI2) with a standard factor loading value of 0.84 and the covariance with service quality (SQUAL) at 71.0 percent. The variable with the lowest standard factor loading value was service empathy (EMPAT2) with a standard factor loading value of 0.75 and the covariance with service quality (SQUAL) at 57.0 percent.

3) For exercise commitment (ECOMM), the variable with the highest factor loading value was social limitation (SOCIA3) with a standard factor loading value of 0.88 and the covariance with exercise commitment (ECOMM) at 78.0 percent, followed by option to involvement (INVOL3) with a standard factor loading value of 0.86 and the covariance with exercise commitment (ECOMM) at 73.0 percent. The variable with the lowest standard factor loading value was opportunity of involvement (INVALT3) with a standard factor loading value of 0.77 and the covariance with exercise commitment (ECOMM) at 59.0 percent.

4) For brand awareness (BEWAR), both variables had the highest standard factor loading value of 0.90 and the covariance with brand awareness (BEWAR) at 80.0 and 81.0 percent, respectively.

5) For brand association (BASSO), the variable with the highest factor loading value was attribute (ATTRIB5) with a standard factor loading value of 0.84 and the covariance with brand association (BASSO) at 70.0 percent, followed by benefit (BENEF5) with a standard factor loading value of 0.78 and the covariance with brand association (BASSO) at 60.0 percent. The variable with the lowest standard factor loading value was brand attitude (BEAITT5) with a standard factor loading value of 0.73 and the covariance with brand association (BASSO) at 54.0 percent; and

6) For brand loyalty (BLOYA), the variable with the highest factor loading value was price sensitivity (REPUR6) with a standard factor loading value of 0.80 and the covariance with brand loyalty (BLOYA) at 64.0 percent, followed by word of mouth (WORDM6) with a standard factor loading value of 0.78 and the covariance with brand loyalty (BLOYA) at 60.0 and 62.0 percent, respectively. The variable with the lowest standard factor loading value was repurchase (PRICE6) with a standard factor loading value of 0.75 and the covariance with brand loyalty (BLOYA) at 56.0 percent.

6. Conclusion and Discussion

For the analysis of the correlation by Maximum Luklihood method, in respect to the first analysis, the results showed that the model was perfectly fitted with the empirical data. Considering the statistics that consist of Chi-Square, x^2/df, CFI, GFI, AGFI, RMSEA and SRMR, it was found that Goodness of Fit Index had no consistency with the empirical data or correspond to the criteria (before adjustment). The author, therefore, adjusted the statistical condition of the model by allowing the error of the observation variables could be related. As for the Adjusted Goodness of Fit index, the model fits the empirical data apparently (after adjustment) as seen in table 2.

Table 2 The Overall Analysis of Goodness of Fit Index of the Model

Index	Criteria	Pre-adjustment		Post-adjustment	
		Statistics	Result	Statistics	Result
χ^2/df	< 2.00	2.769	Fail	1.092	Pass
CFI	0.95	0.990	Pass	1.000	Pass
GFI	0.95	0.880	Fail	0.950	Pass
AGFI	0.90	0.850	Fail	0.940	Pass
RMSEA	< 0.05	0.067	Fail	0.015	Pass
SRMR	< 0.05	0.038	Pass	0.026	Pass

According to the table 2 the overall analysis of the model's Fit Index, the model fitted to empirical data with the following accepted indices: χ^2/df = 1.092, CFI = 1.000, GFI = 0.950, AGFI = 0.940, RMSEA = 0.015, and SRMR = 0.026. Therefore, it could be concluded that the structural equation model fitted to empirical data that could be described as follows:

(1) Comparative Chi-Square (χ^2/df) was 1.092 indicating that the model fitted to empirical data because it was less than 2.00

(2) Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was 1.00 indicating that the model had a comparative fit because it was 0.90 or more

(3) For Absolute Fit Index, two indices were considered: Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) was 0.950 and Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) was 0.940. Therefore, it could be concluded that the model fitted to empirical data because both indices were between 0 and 1 and the acceptable GFI and AGFI were more than 0.90

(4) Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was 0.015 indicating that the model quite fitted to empirical data because RMSEA was less than 0.05 or between 0.05 and 0.08

(5) Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) was 0.026 indicating that the model fitted to empirical data because it was less than 0.05.

As a result, it could be concluded that the Structural Equation Modeling fits the empirical data as seen in figure 2.
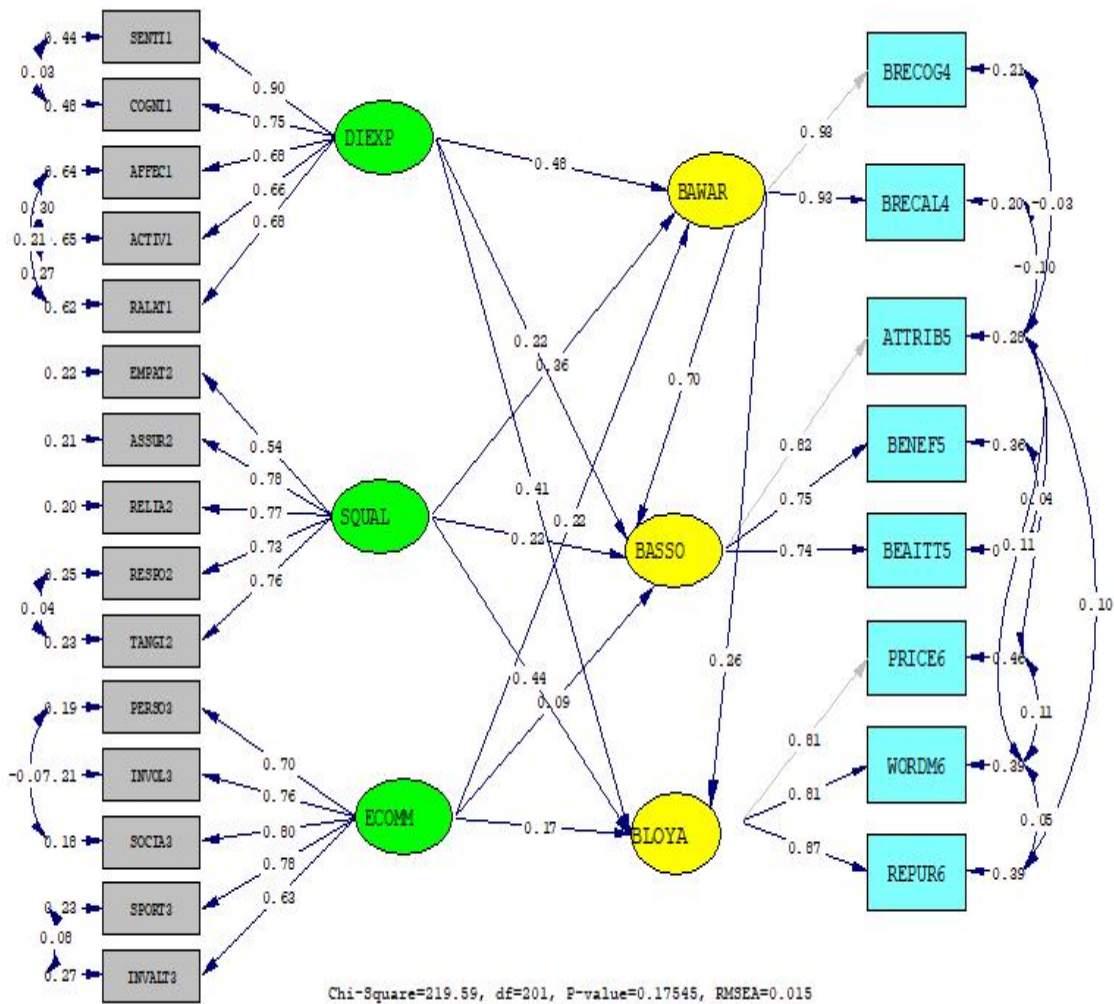
Figure 2 The Overall Analysis of Goodness of Fit Index of the Model

Regarding the figure 2 that represents the test of the casual model in building the brand loyalty of the fitness center business in Bangkok as hypothesized with the empirical data, the study result is as the followings:

1) The direct-experience has the positive direct effect on the brand loyalty of the fitness center business in Bangkok for 0.41, which corresponds to the research of Smith &Swinyard, (1982); Kempf& Smith, (1998); Russell, Dale W. (2010) that found the direct experience associates with the human relation via the senses: sight, sound, hearing, and taste. Furthermore, in the consistency of the research of Keller (2003); Alexandris et al. (2008) the direct experience connects to the brand results in the brand loyalty. It occurs through the direct experience of consumers with the brand and the marketing information that is published by the brand or its stakeholder.

2) The direct experience has the positive direct effect on the brand awareness of the fitness center business in Bangkok for 0.48, which corresponds to the research of Whelan and Wohlfeil (2006); Brakus Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009); Reisenwitz, Timothy H. (2016) as they found that the direct experience means feeling, knowledge, understanding, and responsiveness towards the behavior

induced by the stimulus that relates to the brand. Moreover, in compliance with the works of Chattopadyay and Laborie (2005); Schmitt (2009); Zarantonello and Schmitt, (2010); Reisenwitz, Timothy H. (2016) the brand's experience is the principle that reflects the accumulated information through interaction or past experiences with the brand which become the stimulus of the responsiveness. In addition, similar to the research of Kotler (1973–1974); Khoei, Rahil(2014) it was found that consumers' direct and indirect experience with the brand through sound, size, shape, smell, and color, helps to build the interest, conveying message, and inducing feeling which may increase the purchasing opportunity.

3) The direct experience has the positive direct effect on the brand connection of the fitness center business in Bangkok for 0.22, which corresponds to the research of Aaker(1991); Keller(1993); Gladden & Funk(2001); Alexandris et al. (2008); Ranfagni, Silvia; Guercini, Simone(2014) on the connected feeling with the brand in the context of sports, and to the research of Mahony et al., 2000) the loyalty of fitness brands influences the attitude towards brand and repeat behavior. Additionally, in correspond to Keller's research (2003) he found that the relationship of brands occurs through the consumers' direct experience with the brand and the marketing information.

4) The service quality has the direct influence on the brand loyalty of the fitness center business in Bangkok for 0.44, which corresponds to the research of Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996) ; Hartline, Maxhim and McKee (2000);Harris and de Chernatony (2001); Keller (2003) ; Boyd and Sutherland (2006);Morhart, Herzog and Tomczak (2009) ; Yan Chao(2015); Leckie, Civilai, (2016) as they found that employees have the important roles in evaluating the consumers by giving service of the company. They are the living brand ambassadors that the company invests in training and development to reflect the value of the brand. In consistency with the works of Riley and De Chernatony (2000); Brodie et al., (2009); Fatma, Mobin (2016) the harmonization with the brand building is the integrated process that starts from the relationship between the company and its employees and the interaction between employees and customers.

5) The service quality influences the brand awareness of the fitness center business in Bangkok for 0.36, which corresponds to the research of Goonros, (1984; 1990); Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, (1998); Zeithaml&Bitner, (2006); Alexandris et al., (2008); CorreiaLoureiro (2013) as they found that the service quality is the main concept in the marketing research due to the service quality perception associates with the consumers' satisfaction. Moreover, the SERVQUAL model that is composed of 5 factors has been applied in the research about the service quality. In accordance with the works of Li-Pang Ho (2014); Joongi Eom (2015) it was found that the service quality model in the context of fitness presented in many aspects demonstrates the environment of the fitness gym. Moreover, in compliance with Hajli, Nick(2016)the physical factors of service for the fitness business relate to facilities, the equipment, the environment, the design of facilities, and the social factors in the context of the fitness.

6) The service quality influences the brand awareness of the fitness center business in Bangkok for 0.26, which corresponds to the research of Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, (1988); Cronin and Taylor, 1992); Zeithaml et al., (1996); Zenker Sebastian (2012) they found that the service quality differentiate the expectation of customers and the perception of service and this is the method to make the competition advantages. The service quality is judged by the customers as it relates to the service provider and the interaction between customers and the service. As in the research of Sargeant and West (2001), they found that service perception and service commitment relate to the customer's loyalty. Likewise, according to Cronin and Taylor (1992); Rust and Oliver (1994); Oliver (1999); Schnittka, Oliver(2012); Guercini,Simone(2014); Chih-Hao Chen(2015) the service quality influences the idea development in brand connection that also affects the brand loyalty of customers.

Similar Aaker (1991) the building brand royalty through the brand connection focuses on the customers' satisfaction received from the service quality.

7) The commitment of exercising influences the brand loyalty of the fitness center business in Bangkok for 0.17, which corresponds to the research of Jacoby and Chesnut (1978) ; Dick and Basu (1994) ; Back (2005) ;Casper, J. (2007); Wang, Chao; Kwok, Simon (2010) the commitment in exercising has the relation with the brand loyalty which represents that the loyalty appears in the strong attitude, commitment, and intention in doing sports. It could be evaluated that it is the process when the customer becomes the brand loyalty which stems from the knowledge that becomes the loyalty. In conformity with the works of relationship between commitment in works and other factors were found. In addition, for Scanlan TK (1993); MacAuley D (2001) they discovered that the commitment in exercising relates to brand loyalty as it has been developed in the context of competitive sports to test this commitment.

8) The commitment of exercising influences the brand awareness of the fitness center business in Bangkok for 0.22, which corresponds to the research of Scanlan TK(1993); Simons JP(1993);Alexander et al. (2002);Algesheimer et al., (2005); Dwyer, B. (2010); Datta, Saroj Kumar. Anvesha(2014) they found that if the consumers have the good feeling about the sports brands, their attitude of commitment to exercising will be produced resulting in the feeling toward the sports brands. It indicates the commitment to exercising builds the emotional relation with the brand. Like Asker (1991); Fullerton, S. (2007) they divided the brand into 4 components which are (1) quality perception, (2) brand perception (3)brand connection and (4) brand loyalty. In conformity with Shocker, Srivastava&Ruekert (1994); Boone, Kochunny and Wilkins (1995); Jensen, Jonathan A. (2015) the customers' loyalty is the key to maintain the brand. As in the research of Scanlan, Carpenter, Schmidt, Simons and Keeler (1993) ;Yoo et al., (2000); Keller(2003) ; Alexandris et al., (2008) the role of commitment in exercising is the primary factor of brand connection; it is created by the consumers' direct experience.

9) The commitment of exercising influences the brand connection of the fitness center business in Bangkok for 0.29, which corresponds to the research of Boninger, Krosnick, &Berent (1995) ; Keller(2003); Ross et al. (2006); Ranfagni, Silvia(2014) the brand connection will be created following to the level of mental commitment towards exercising. It indicates the type of connection that the fitness member receives. Moreover, according to Ross (2006) he suggested that the value of brand includes the connection with the brand, brand recognition, and brand loyalty as they are the hearts and could be applicable in the fitness center business. In agreement with the research of Scanlan TK (1993); Carpenter PJ (1993); Mahony, Madrigal and Howard (2000);Filo et al. (2008) ; Koll, Oliver (2011); Chih-Hao Chen (2015) the relationship between brand connection and brand loyalty will have the extremely positive attitude towards the sport brands. As Aaker (1996) confirmed the good brand connection with the service user tends to receive the higher loyalty from customers.

10) The brand awareness influences the brand loyalty of the fitness center business in Bangkok for 0.26, which corresponds to the research of Aaker (1991) brand awareness affect perception and loyalty. As in the previous research that tested the relationship between brand perception and brand loyalty, it shows the consistency with the works of Yoo et al. (2000); Jung& Sung, (2008) according to the theory of Aaker (1991) it demonstrates that brand perception and the good relation has the effect on brand loyalty, including perception and building of brand. This exemplifies the effect of brand perception and any associated with brand loyalty. Correspondingly, the studies of Pappu et al., (2005); Pappu& Quester, (2006); Baig, Sajjad Ahmad (2015) represent the positive effect of perception of brand loyalty. There is the difference between brand perception and brand loyalty in

compliance with Khoei, Rahil (2014); Li-Pang Ho (2014); Baig, Sajjad Ahmad (2015); Jensen, Jonathan A. (2015).

7. Suggestions

      1. Suggestions for the implementation in the management.

1) The fitness entrepreneurs must study information and do the analysis while giving priority to the 5 direct experiences: 1) Sensitive 2) Cognitive 3) Affective 4) Active and 5) Relational that affects the behavior of fitness service users, for example, the mesmerizing of logo/title/brand of the fitness gym when hearing/seeing from the media, the recall of brand or logo of the fitness gym when they want to do exercise. To be unique, as compared to the rivals, means credibility to use the service for a long period. Meanwhile, the brand loyalty of the fitness center, for instance, the regular use of the fitness services, the suggestions of service promotions to friends or relatives, and if the service price is up, they still use the same service, the analysis of this information to plan the operation in the short period and in the long run will increase efficiency and effectiveness of brand awareness, brand connection, and brand loyalty of service users.

      2) The fitness entrepreneurs must study information and analyze the factors affecting the users' behavior in being aware of the brand, remembering logo/title/brand of the fitness after hearing/seeing the brand from the media, and recall the brand or the logo once they want to do the exercise. Moreover, they must study the information of the brand loyalty, for example, when the termination of the contract, the customers intend to return to use the service in the future. With SERVQUAL too to measure 22 programs, there are 5 dimensions which are 1) Empathy 2) Assurance 3) Responsiveness 4) Reliability and 5) Tangible. They are the tools to realize the empirical data that indicates the efficiency of the operation while the quantitative data and the qualitative data make the complete understanding about the service expectation of customers and the entrepreneurs are able to give the service that fit or over their expectation. These data could be applied for the short-term and long-term planning of the operation for better efficiency and effectiveness.

3) The fitness entrepreneurs must study information and do the analysis by paying attention to the commitment in the 5 exercise factors which are 1) Sport Enjoyment 2) Involvement Opportunities 3) Involvement Alternatives 4) Social Constraints and 5) Involvement Opportunities that affect the behavior of service users to mesmerize the brand when they see in the media or recall the brand or the logo rapidly, including the data of brand loyalty, repeat purchase after the termination of contract, promotion of services to friends or relatives. These data should be analyzed to respond the brand awareness, brand connection, and brand loyalty for better efficiency and effectiveness.

4) The fitness entrepreneurs must study information and analyze the factors by giving importance to brand awareness which includes brand recognition and brand recall which influence the behavior of fitness service users, for example, when it comes to the termination of contract, they want to extend the contract which indicates their intention to return in the future; to suggest promotion or services to friends or relatives all the time, and if the price is up, they still return to use the service. The analysis of these data will build the brand loyalty that focuses on mesmerizing the logo/brand after hearing/seeing the brand of the fitness while the brand recall of logo recall is when they want to do the exercise and think of the brand. These data could be applied for the short-term and long-term planning of the operation for the unstoppable enhancement of efficiency and effectiveness.

5) The fitness entrepreneurs must study information and analyze the factors by giving importance to the 3 aspects of brand connections which are 1) Product Attribute 2) Benefit and 3) Brand Attitude, which influences the brand loyalty, for example, the uniqueness of the brand compared to the rival means the consumers regard that it makes them learn how to exercise more correctly and the activity becomes relax or relive the stress. The connection that relates to symbols becomes the structure of the product's identity causing consumers to remember and recall the brand easier. The strength of symbol is the main component in the development of brand and value perception. The connection will help to manage the brand effectively by perceiving/inputting data, making the difference, building a reason to purchase, building positive attitude/feeling, and being the foundation for the extension of the brand.

2. For further researching, the model in this research should be applied in the other educational institutes or the units relating to fitness business in Thailand or foreign countries as the mean to validate the consistency with the empirical data. Moreover, the other casual factors should be studied to realize the effect on brand awareness, brand connection, and brand loyalty. In the next research, Ethnographic Delphi Futures Research is probably applied and the comparative study of brand loyalty and the leading fitness business in Thailand in the state sector and the private sector should be continued.

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