Essays on Customer Loyalty Framework Case: Infant Formula Product Brand Recommenders

Thesis Paper

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of IICSE University …a liberal arts education.

In Partial Fulfillment   of the Requirements of the Degree of PhD in Management

By:

Kitcha Ing-udomnoogoon,
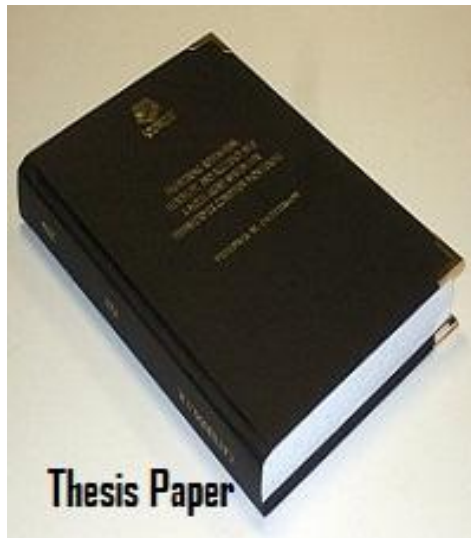
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CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

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by

Dr. Robert Cyril

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Author

Kitcha Ing-udomnoogoon

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ABSTRACT

This thesis was conducted during the author's first year of a three-year PhD program at the IICSE University, USA. The thesis had its focus on exploring impacting factors and behaviors of product brand recommenders in relation to customer loyalty, which is an unexplored field of research in Thailand. Most research studies in Thailand focus on brand loyalty of end-customers, none has explored loyalty behaviors of product brand recommenders or product brand endorsers. Product brand recommenders/endorsers are those who recommend or endorse specific product brand(s) to potential end users and/or customers. Product brand recommenders might or might not be direct product brand users by nature.

Quantitative research methods were mainly used in this dissertation research. A case study of customer loyalty behaviors of infant formula brand recommenders was explored in detail. Primary survey pen-and-paper based questionnaire and the interviews were the major information sources of the empirical data for the research, complemented with secondary data sources where relevant. The theoretical framework aims to find knowledge for compiling the main elements of customer loyalty behaviors of product brand recommenders in this thesis. The results of the thesis were customer loyalty model developed for brand recommenders of any product.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The introduction chapter starts off with informing the reader about the concept of customer loyalty and product involvement followed by a problem discussion where the researchers problematize the research area. Lastly, the chapter ends with the author's stating the purpose of the study.

1.1 Background

Customer loyalty is defined as positive feelings towards a brand and dedication to purchase the same product or service repeatedly now and in the future from the same brand, regardless of a competitor's actions or changes in the environment. It can also be demonstrated with other behaviors such as positive word-of-mouth advocacy. Customer loyalty is where an individual buys and/or recommends product from the same manufacturer repeatedly rather than from other suppliers (Kotler, 1991). Customer loyalty is both an attitudinal and behavioral tendency to favor one brand over all others, whether due to satisfaction with the product or service, its convenience or performance, or simply familiarity and comfort with the brand. Customer loyalty encourages consumers to shop more consistently, spend a greater share of wallet, recommend product more actively, and feel positive about a shopping experience, helping attract consumers to familiar brands in the face of a competitive environment.

It is becoming increasingly important for brands to make sure that they are competitive in every possible way. Building a strong brand that customers can be loyal towards could be done with the help of a name, sign, symbol, term, design, or a combination of these. Today everything is branded in order to make it easier for customers to purchase products that they will appreciate, find useful and of course be able to identify and come back to (Armstrong et al, 2009). If a brand is competitive

and consumers see value in the brand, they will most likely repurchase (and recommend) it (Aaker, 1991).

To have consumers that are loyal towards brand is something that every brand should prioritize, since those customers are a great source of possible income (Roy, 2011). Jacoby & Kyner (1973) described customer loyalty as different factors for a customer to engage in, those are; the buying decisions has to be nonrandom, expressed over time, a behavioral response, occur decision making unit, conscious choose the brand even though it exist brands who offer similar products, and it does also have to be a psychological evaluation process. Managers must try to identify these customers, which often have similar tendencies among each other (Hanzaee et al, 2011).

Getting customers involved with a brand is a way to create customer loyalty (Jacoby & Kyner, 1973). The central premise in research is that the more involved a consumer is with a brand, the more loyal the consumer will be towards the brand (Quester & Lim, 2003). Involvement is somewhat differently referred to depending on the research, but there is an emerging consensus for the definition: "Involvement is an unobservable state of motivation, arousal or interest. It is evoked by a particular stimulus or situation and has driven properties. Its consequences are types of searching, information-processing and decision making." (Kapferer & Laurent, 1985, p.49). Quester & Lim (2003) stressed the importance that research must discuss the concept of product involvement from the perspective of the consumer rather than the product. It is a consumer-defined concept as it is consumers that respond and be involved with products (Quester & Lim, 2003). Quester & Lim (2003) discussed involvement, compared to Kapferer & Laurent (1985) as a consumer's ongoing commitment in the form of feelings, thoughts and behavioral response towards products. Involved consumers will have stronger reactions when exposed to a certain

product, such as in advertising. Product involvement is today often seen as an important step of a branding strategy (Kapferer & Laurent, 1985).

1.2 Statement of The Problem

Kapferer & Laurent (1985) argue that individuals are involved with products for different reasons, while also stating that it is hard to determine what it is that makes one involved with a product. An individual might be involved due to cognitive reasons, derived from utilitarian motives. Another might be involved due to affective reasons, derived from emotional motives (Kapferer & Laurent, 1985).

Most previous research on customer loyalty has been carried out in static market and mature environment (Son K, et al., 2010). For markets where buying process extensively involves product brand recommenders in final purchase decision, no research has been done to identify customer loyalty behavior and underlying factors of product brand recommenders, but more on product users. As such, it is interesting to identify underlying factors that affect product brand recommenders on recommending specific product brand to potential customers and the outcome behaviors of product brand recommenders. Examples are pharmaceutical market where physicians recommend and prescribe medical products to patients but not using the medical products on their own, and infant formula Phase 1 & 2 market where healthcare professionals (physicians and nurses) play extensive recommender roles of specific infant formula product brand(s) to mothers. Phase 1 & 2 infant formula products are for infants aged less than 12 months.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is analyzing causal antecedent factors that lead to customer loyalty behaviors of product brand recommenders, with a case study in infant formula product category.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Some of the world's most trusted brands have been around for over 150 years. These brands that have won consumer hearts for over a hundred years (and have yielded rich profits for their parent companies) include Quaker Oats, Ivory, Listerine, Coca Cola, Pepsi and Levi's. The parent companies of these brands have nurtured and built on the equity of these brands over these years, in spite of the fact that the term 'customer loyalty' didn't exist until 1980.

Customer loyalty first appeared in academic literature in the 1980's, although it has existed in practice and its importance has been realized by practitioners for long. Till the 1970s, researchers were interested in the total combined effect of the brand and product and they did not distinguish the impact of the brand from that of the product. Srinivasan's (1979) was the first study that demonstrated the individual added value of the brand to the product. The Marketing Science Institute sponsored research in this area and subsequently in the 1980s the term customer loyalty was used to refer to this incremental value add that the brand name conferred onto the product. Its importance has been recognized for over a century and only attempts to define and measure it have happened since the late 1980s.

Customer loyalty is usually defined as a customer's intention or actual behavior to repeatedly purchase certain products or services; and/or recommend products or services to other consumers. Indeed, the costs of attracting a new customer have been found to be up to six times higher than the costs of retaining old ones (Rosenberg & Czepiel, 1983). Customer loyalty, therefore, has been considered a significant asset to an enterprise. A critical issue for the continued success of a firm is its capability to retain its current customers and make them loyalty to its brands.

Early views of loyalty focused on repeat purchase behavior (Brown, 1952). Kuehn (1962) measured loyalty by the probability of product repurchase. Day (1977) suggested that a behavioral

definition is insufficient because it does not distinguish between true loyalty and spurious loyalty that may result repeat purchase behavior. To express the view that loyalty is a biased behavior purchase process that results from a psychological process. Srini, Rolph & Kishore (2002) suggested that both the attitudinal behavioral dimensions needed to be incorporated in any measurement of loyalty.

Studies have shown that most grocery shoppers have a primary store in which they make a large share of purchases (Anne et al., 2003). While loyal customers' focus both on the economic aspects of the transaction and the relationship with the firm, less loyal customers focus mainly on the economic aspects. Reichheld, Markey & Hopton (2000) reveals that loyal customers have lower price elasticity than non-loyal customers, and they are willing to pay a premium to continue doing business with their preferred retailers rather than additional search costs. Some researchers (e.g., Dick & Kunal, 1994; Hagel & Arthur, 1997) indicated that loyal customers are more likely to provide positive word-of mouth. Customers' loyalty to a service provider is influenced by their overall satisfaction with the provider; most of prior research studies have found qualified support for a positive satisfaction-customer retention relationship (Rust & Zahorik, 1993).

Customer satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) has become an important issue for marketing practitioners because of the rapid business environment. Customer loyalty is not the same as customer satisfaction, but it measures how good customer's expectations are met by a given transaction, while customer loyalty measures how likely a customer is to repurchase and engage in partnership activities. Satisfaction is a necessary but a sufficient condition for loyalty without satisfaction.

Satisfaction and loyalty are not surrogating for each other (Bloemer & Kasper, 1995; Oliver, 1999).

It is possible for customers to be loyal without being highly satisfied (e.g., when they are few other choices) and to be highly satisfied and yet not loyal (e.g., when many alternatives are available). Firms are needed to gain a better understanding of the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty in the online environment and to allocate the online marketing efforts between satisfaction initiatives and loyalty program.

Most researchers propose (e.g., Jones & Sasser, 1995; Gianmario & Emanuela, 2002) that the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty is positive, i.e., the more satisfied customer is with a product the more loyal they are to the brand. Therefore, the exact nature of the relationship between overall satisfaction and loyalty is an empirical issue.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical knowledge is presented in this chapter. The main objective is to present general brand equity and customer loyalty theories as framework for further analysis. Customer loyalty i.e. the dependent variable is discussed and then all the independent variables are described. Later section covers perceive brand quality and describes customer satisfaction. Brand image and brand experience are also discussed respectively. Finally, theoretical framework and research hypotheses are developed at the end of this chapter.

3.1 Customer loyalty

Customer loyalty is the main subject of interest for marketing researchers. The previous research on customer loyalty shows that spending expenses and number or product recommendations of loyal buyers are higher than non-loyal buyers. So, brand loyal customers are considered to be a company`s most valuable group (Ganesh, Arnold & Reynolds, 2000). The theories based on customer loyalty are defined based on two components; they are attitudinal loyalty and behavioral loyalty (Russell, McColl & Coote, 2007). There has been a lot focus on attitudinal customer loyalty since it could not portray a satisfactory scenario of loyalty. Dick & Basu (1994, p. 100) a state that "the behavioral definition is, consequently, insufficient to explain how and why customer loyalty developed and modified up". Further, they describe that behavioral loyalty is related to proportional purchase, purchase sequence and the probability of purchase. Moreover, the attitudinal components got more support from Kabiraj & Shanmugan (2011, p. 286), who interpret "customer loyalty is the consumer's conscious or unconscious decision, expressed through intention or behavior, to repurchase a brand continually". Customer loyalty can be described as, "a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product/service consistently in

the future, causing a repetitive same brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior" (Son K, et al., 2010). Dick & Basu (1994) explain there may be positive as well as negative perception of the consumers towards the brand and the negative perception may lead to patronize of the brand but in few occasions.

Dick and Basu's (1994) customer loyalty model is the combination on both attitude and behavior loyalty. Moreover, they developed the conceptual framework for customer loyalty and defined "loyalty is the result of the interaction between a customer's relative attitude to a brand, and their repeat purchase behavior for that brand". Further, the loyal group of customers was divided into four types; true loyal, spurious loyal latent loyal and non-loyal. 'True loyal' customers were the group of people with high attitudinal and behavioral loyalty, those with high behavioral loyalty, but low attitudinal loyalty as 'spurious loyal', those with high attitudinal loyalty but low behavioral loyalty as 'latent loyal', and those with low attitudinal and behavioral loyalty as 'non- loyal' (Dick & Basu, 1994). The pattern in consuming durable and non-durable goods or consumption goods are not similar Thiele & Bennett (2001). Customers make a purchase in consumption goods frequently while the purchase of durable goods is made on rare occasions. Customer loyalty is a consumer attachment to a high value of the brand (Aaker, 1996). A consumer will deliver loyalty, trust for the brand in regard to their beliefs and expectation. Also, they will get remained to their loyal brand and are not carried away by the strategies of their competitor`s brand (Aaker, 1996). He further describes customer loyalty of customers in five different levels.

- The consumers who often switch their brand and don't consider remaining to the brand is a switcher.

- A Habitual Buyer is a group of loyal customers, but the loyalty may not necessarily be on satisfaction and pride.

- The consumers satisfied with the brand are satisfied buyers. They are the loyal customers based on profit and loss, but the loyalty is not based on pride and familiarity of the brand.

- The next level of consumers is those who liked the brand. Now, influence towards new product is rare, but the consumer group yet openly does not express their pride to others related to the brand.

- Committed buyers are the group of consumers who feels proud towards the brand and express their pride which results as a promotion of the brand.

3.2 Perceived brand quality

Aaker (1991) states the perceive quality of consumers has a great impact towards loyalty of the brand and company success. It plays a vital role to maintain a warm relationship and trust inside the customers. Thus, perceive quality grows stronger and keeps away from competitors developed a parameter to measure the quality of durable goods. According to them, easy access, serviceability, durability, performance and excellent feature determine the quality towards brand loyal customers.   Perceived quality is defined as the consumers' judgment about an entity's (service's) overall excellence or superiority (Zeithaml, 1988). Rowley (1998) defines perceive quality in the service sector is a kind of attitude, but different from the satisfaction, occurs as perception of performance from their expectations. The main parameter for the customer loyalty is the perceived quality. He explains that when the perceived quality is regarded the most important element of the brand, results in the occurrence of customer loyalty. The perceive brand quality

enhances the profitability of the company due to the influence in customer loyalty and the increase of satisfied customers (Apéria & Back, 2004). Kan (2002) defines perceived quality is the overall knowledge and experience applied while making a purchase that includes the attributes like product benefit, durability, reliability, function of the product. Aaker (1996) defines the difference between perceiving quality and real quality. It is because the customer gets negatively affected by the bad image of the product in the future as well. Besides, the consumers will not believe the same product, even if its quality has been upgraded later. Consumer examines a product quality from their past knowledge and experiences which results in consumer subjective judgment in product quality (Holbrook & Corfman, 1985).

3.3 Customer satisfaction

The previous studies based on customer satisfaction portray it has a direct and indirect impact on the profitability of the firm. Luo & Homburg (2007) explain that customer satisfaction has a positive influence on the profitability of the firm. Most of the studies are carried with the relationship with the customer business pattern. (Chi & Qu, 2008) states that the brand Kotler & Armstrong (2010, p37) defines customer satisfaction as ``the extent to which a product's (whether goods or services) perceived performance matches a buyer's expectations``. Customer satisfaction is a major driver information of the customer's desires for future purchase (Mittal & Kamakura, 2001). Customer Satisfaction is the overall accumulation of customer expectation before the purchase and after purchase of the product. Loyalty of the customer increase with the increase in customer satisfaction. Moreover, it leads to positive word-of-mouth and enforces the repurchasing behavior. According to Shukla (2004, p. 85), customer satisfaction is "customer's psychological

response to his/her or her positive evaluation of the consumption outcome in relation to his/her expectation". Satisfaction is derived after the consumption of the product or service. The customer evaluation of satisfaction is the comparison between the expected performances with the actual performance (Shukla, 2004). The performance of the product or service is highly influenced by the expectation of customer (Churchill & Surprenant, 1982). The performance of the brand depends upon the features and attributes that the customer expects. These characteristics can be in the form of hardware, software, style or another functionality. Customer satisfaction is one of the measures for finding the performance of the product and organization relating to its competitive market environment. Santouridis & Trivellas (2010) mentions satisfied customers have high possibility to stick with the existing product of the company while dissatisfied can switch easily to other alternative brands.

The loyalty to the brand and positive attitude is determined by the satisfied customers. Moreover, it enforces the loyal customer for repurchase of product again and again. Further, many empirical studies on products showed that satisfaction leads towards positive loyalty. The satisfied customer repurchases the product for the next time as well. Satisfaction is the determining factor for customer loyalty, but in some condition, a satisfied customer might turn towards other similar products. To ensure repurchasing behavior, a satisfied customer should also possess a positive attitude towards the customer product. The loyalty to the brand and positive attitude is determined by the satisfied customers. Moreover, it enforces the loyal customer for repurchase of product again and again.

3.4 Brand image

Keller (1993) describes ``Brand image is the perceptions of the customers which are reflected by the different associations they held in mind about the brand``. Keller further defines that images are created by brand associations which is the perception inside the memory of the customer. Images are those perceptions that customer think about the brand that appears in their mind (Keller,1993). Brand image is a major factor for the organization to launch their products and services successfully in the market (Coulter & Zaltmen, 1994). According to Roth (1992), brand image is the meaning consumers associated with the products.

Brand Image acts a major part of the proper judgment and evaluation of the product or service, leading to influence in customer loyalty (Chen & Myagmarsuren, 2001). Moreover, brand image increases attitudinal and behavioral responsiveness of the followers. Brand image is defined as "perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand association held in consumer memory" (Lee. H, Lee. C & Wu. C, 2011). They further state that consumers generally mix the tangible and intangible characteristics of the brand through feeling and thoughts in their mind. And those positive feelings and attitudes towards the brand results in the repurchase of the product. (Lee. H, Lee. C & Wu. C, 2011). The major characteristics of the brand image are its uniqueness while compare with its competing products. The uniqueness of the product may differ from each other according to its color, packaging, weight, design, texture and others.

Brand image portrays the overall image and impression of the brand in the memory of the customers (Upamannyu & Mathur, 2012). Also, brand image displays the content of the brand like reputation, function, brand name and overall values (Upamannyu & Mathur, 2012). The brand image plays a major role in repurchasing product, differentiating from its competitors, adds attachment towards the brand for its customers (Aaker,1991). Kuusik (2007) concludes that brand

image is the most significant variable that increase the customer loyalty of the product or service. Lazarevic (2011) states brand image is the most impressive measure to reach the goal of customer loyalty. Therefore, a positive brand image leads firms to deliver their brand value to their customers which reinforces the customer loyalty.

3.5 Brand experience

Brand experience is subjective, internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions and behavioral responses) evoked by brand related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments (Brakus et al., 2009). According to them, the consumer experience is generated from the interaction of consumer between tangible or intangible brand that arises as consumer responses after consuming a brand. They further classify brand experience into four major dimensions; sensory, affective, intellectual and behavioral. The brand experience is the main motivating factor for brand repurchase (Brakus et al., 2009). Ambler et al. (2002) describes the brand experience is generated after the consumption of the product, taking about the brand resulting the promotion and other marketing activities. The brand experience in the service sector is created by the perception of the customers at every touch point after being directly involved with the services or through any kind of advertisement (Alloza, 2008). The major elements influencing customer loyalty are brand name, design, symbols, materials, packaging, environment and others (Shim, 2012). The brand experience reinforces positive feelings and sentiments of their customers towards the brand, so it is considered to be valuable driving factor for customer loyalty (Brakus et al, 2009). The consumers having a positive brand using experience, Acknowledge the brand and supplier and these positive factors may lead to the

re consumption of the same brand. The importance of brand experience is that it not only increases the willingness to consume the brand again, but also influence the willing, to try for its brand line extensions (Kim & Sullivan, 1998). These brand extensions are the different products but produced by the same brand of company. These researchers conclude that there exists a strong relation between brand experience and customer loyalty. The brand experience can be positive as well as negative and the positive and the pleasant brand experience leads towards the customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (Brakus et al., 2009). A customer having strong and positive brand experience will be reminded by the customer and it may result in repurchase of the brand (Houch & Deighton, 1989). Therefore, a pleasant and memorable brand experience will develop the trust and warm relationship with the customer that will develop customer loyalty in the future (da Motto Filho, 2012).

3.6 Customer loyalty

Oliver (1999, page 33) defines loyalty as "a deeply held commitment to rebuild and re-patronize a preferred product or service in the future despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviors. "Customer loyalty is viewed as the strength of the relationship between an individual's relative attitude and re-patronage. Although customer satisfaction is a crucial part of a business, satisfaction alone cannot take a business to a top level. Customer satisfaction produces a positive financial result, especially in regular purchases. Today's unforgiving market where creating and maintaining customer loyalty is more complex than it used to be in the past years. This is because of technological breakthrough and widespread of the internet uses. Loyalty building requires the company to focus the value of its product and services and to

show that it is interested to fulfill the desire or build the relationship with customers (Griffin, 2002).

Thomas & Tobe (2013) emphasize that "loyalty is more profitable." The expenses to gain a new customer is much more than retaining existing one. Loyal customers will encourage others to buy from you and think more than twice before changing their mind to buy other services. Customer loyalty is not gained by an accident, they are constructed through the sourcing and design decisions. Designing for customer loyalty requires customer-centered approaches that recognize the want and interest of service receiver. Customer loyalty is built over time across multiple transactions.

A relationship with a customer is equally important in customer loyalty and this requires that company work in a broader context that extends beyond itself, as no company can be world class at everything (McDonlad & Keen 2000). Gremler & Brown (1999) divided customer loyalty into three different categories that include behavior loyalty, intentional loyalty, and emotional loyalty. Behavior loyalty is repeating purchasing behavior while intentional loyalty is the possible buying intention. Emotional loyalty, however, is achieved when a customer feels that a brand corresponds with their value, ideas, and passion.

Figure 1: Relationship between customer loyalty and company profit

Figure 1 illustrates how much customer loyalty is as much a process as other. According to the model of the customer loyalty factors forming customer loyalty such as understanding the customer's needs, wants. The company must pay attention to price, promotion, service and products in order to gain the customer loyalty. At the same time to create the comfort environment between the customer and the company is vital. Investment to loyal customers brings advantages to the business such as growing effectiveness and profit of the business.

Customer loyalty is another important factor in customer satisfaction. The impact of the satisfaction in loyalty has been the most popular subject in study of the marketing theory. Therefore, several studies have proved that satisfaction and loyalty have the direct connection between one another. As satisfied customers are loyal and dissatisfied customers are a vendor (Heskett, 2011).

Finding the loyal customer is not accessible even the customers seem to be satisfied with the products and the services. In fact, the behavior and attitude of the customers towards the particular goods and services matters the most. If the behavior of the customers is positive to the service holder, then those customers are said as a loyal customer (Abdullah, 2012). There are two types of customer loyalty based on behavioral and emotional loyalty on the goods and services. Behavioral loyalty refers to frequent shopping in a particular retailer and emotional loyalty refers to the customers' concern towards certain retailer on the basis of past buying experience and attitude. In this both behavioral and emotional loyalty model, increased satisfaction should increase customer loyalty. When customers are not satisfied, customers have the option to express the complaints going to the competitor. The study has shown that 60-80% of the customers are satisfied and very satisfied on the survey just prior to the defection. Therefore, there should also be other factors

besides satisfaction that have a certain impact on customer loyalty (Reichheld & Schefter, 2000).

At the time of 1980 product durability and service quality used to be evaluated by customer loyalty. However, there has been dramatic changing in the late 1980 and in 1990, when the needs and wants of the customers were identified by the retailers in the market. Nowadays, in this modern era, the companies have changed this concept towards the initial target consumers by manufacturing ordinary product benefits in order to persuade customers' satisfaction and loyalty (Abdullah, 2012). Service quality, product quality, price strategy, store attributes are the four major variables that influence customer loyalty. Service is one of the most complex factors which do not exist before they are consumed. In order, to develop the service management it is important to understand what customers are really looking for and what the customers evaluate. Customers expect the quality of service through retailers, so, the service marketers have to assess how customers perceive the quality of the "services feature" implied by the perceived service quality framework.

Service quality refers to the result of the comparison that the customer makes their expectation about the service and their perception of the way the service has been performed. Originally, there was no any model for the quality measurement based on a service quality. Normally, customer satisfaction studies are conducted to figure out how satisfied customers are with a certain service.

The relationship between customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and service quality are studied based on the complaints from the dissatisfied customers (Ziethaml & Bitner 2003, page 134). Hence, consumer complaints are overviewed through customers' expectations, perceptions on the service of goods. The perceived value of the consumers is liable on the expectations and outcomes

of the evaluation process of the customers. Further, service quality has a significant relationship with the customers' satisfaction which directly affects the customers' loyalty. Therefore, the retailer should focus on these factors to increase customer relationship with satisfaction and loyalty in this competitive retail market globally. Product quality is also another core factor of the customer's satisfaction and loyalty. Product quality is a collection of features and sharp brand product characteristics which have a contribution to the ability to fulfill specified demand. Product qualities also have different dimensions such as features, performance, reliability, durability, serviceability and customer perceived quality. Out of all these dimensions, mainly five elements, product durability, product variety, product freshness, product attractiveness and product equity have been used to measure the satisfaction and loyalty of the customers. Variety of products helps the retailers understand the buying behavior of the customers because the perceptions of the quality product vary from one another. Because of product variety, the firms will get an opportunity to pay attention towards the customer and also increase the greatest product variety. This will increase the growth and volume of the product as well as the customers' satisfaction and loyalty to a great extent. Hence, the firms had begun to develop the satisfaction and loyalty of the customers by offering quality goods and services.

3.7 Conceptual framework

The variables were taken into consideration from the previous studies. In this thesis study, customer loyalty framework has been developed on basic framework of how customers become loyal to certain product or service, and the model proposes a way to measure loyalty index of

interested brands in target domain, as well as which factors actually drive loyalty of certain customers. The theoretical framework is illustrated in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Customer loyalty framework
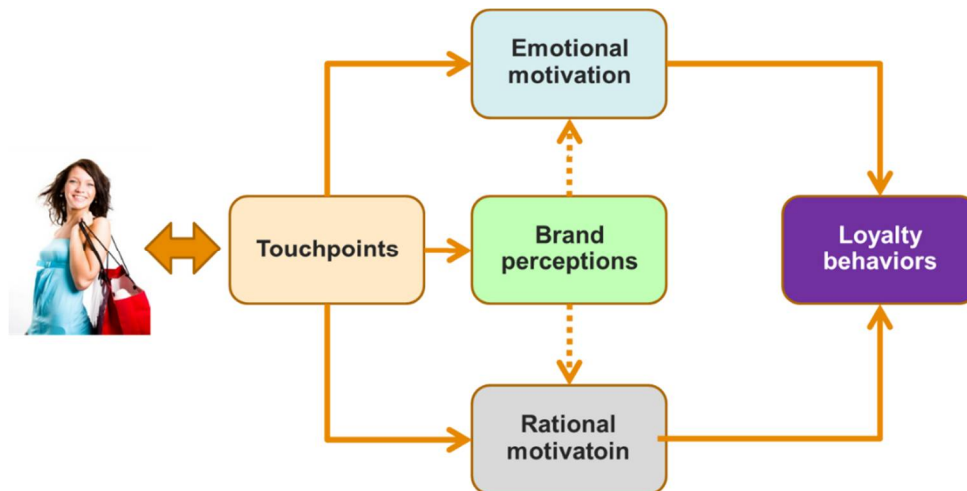
In this customer loyalty framework, customers (product brand recommenders) have direct or indirect experiences through target product brand through different touchpoints. Exposure through different touchpoints directly result in consequences of emotional motivation, rational motivation, and brand perceptions of the target product brand; whereas brand perceptions also play certain influences on both emotional motivation and rational motivation of customers. Intuitively, this framework has been developed based on basic beliefs that being loyal to any specific product brand, customers rely on both emotional and rational aspects of the decision factors. Both emotional motivation and rational motivation shape loyalty behaviors of the customer towards specific product brand.

- Touchpoints are people, channels, and media that customers have been exposed, interacted, and communicated on product information with the brand.

- Emotional motivation is defined as a set of motivation related emotional attributes that impact on how customers are loyal to the brand.

- Rational motivation is defined as a set of motivation related rational attributes that impact on how customers are loyal to the brand.

- Brand perceptions are shaped by the sum of all experiences that customers have with the brand. In short, people buy when they believe in the value of what they are getting, and their focus is drawn away, through critical factors like perceived quality, from the plethora of options available in the market to the one or two products that 'feel like them'.

- Loyalty behaviors are common behaviors that customers usually behave and/or express toward the product brand they are loyal to.

3.8 Research hypotheses

Major objective of this research study is to investigate customer loyalty behaviors and underlying factors in Thailand that affect to such loyalty behaviors toward specific brand, particularly focusing on product brand recommenders and not direct customers. The case study of infant formula product brand recommenders, which are physicians and nurses at the hospitals in Thailand, is being explored in detail. Two major research hypotheses are defined for this research study:

Hypothesis 1: Different touchpoints have different impacts on loyalty of product brand recommenders on specific infant formula product brand.

Hypothesis 2: Specific to physicians and nurses at the hospitals in Thailand who play brand recommender roles of infant formula brand to mothers, emotional motivation has higher impact than rational motivation on customer loyalty.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

The scientific research design is discussed in this chapter, focusing on the ways in which the data were gathered and analyzed in order to find answers to the pre-defined hypotheses. The discussion includes research methods, the research process, data collection and analysis and limitations of research. Since there are two hypotheses to be explored in this thesis study, research methodology will be discussed for both hypotheses.

4.1 Research Method

There are 2 phases in research process for this thesis study.

<u>Phase 1 Method</u>

Exploratory qualitative in-depth interview method with physicians and nurses were conducted face-to-face to identify all relevant attributes for each component as defined in customer loyal framework.

- Touchpoints: Exploratory interviews with physicians and nurses to identify all possible touchpoints (people, channel, media, etc) that they have interacted and received information on any infant formula product brand.

- Emotional motivation: Exploratory interview with physicians and nurses to identify all possible emotional motivating attributes on brand preference/loyalty they have on any infant formula product brand.

- Rational motivation: Exploratory interview with physicians and nurses to identify all possible rational motivating attributes on brand preference/loyalty they have on any infant formula product brand.

- Brand perceptions: Exploratory interview with physicians and nurses to identify all possible brand perceptual attributes on any infant formula product brand.

- Loyalty behaviors: Exploratory interview with physicians and nurses to identify all possible loyalty behaviors and characteristics they have on any infant formula product brand.

The aim of this research phase is to list down all relevant attributes and make sure they are mutual exclusive, collectively exhaustive in design, which will be tested quantitatively with representative samples in Phase 2.

Sampling

There were 5 physicians (3 pediatricians and 2 Ob gynecologists) and 5 nurses (3 pediatric nurses and 2 Ob nurses), all in Bangkok, randomly recruited for exploratory qualitative in-depth interview. (Note: Ob is an abbreviation of obstetrics)

Phase 2 Method

For both hypothesis 1 & 2, a single research survey with quantitative face-to-face interview method was used following nature of both hypotheses that require representative sample size in order to draw concrete research implications and conclusions.

Quantitative interviews were conducted with physicians and nurses in face-to-face at own medical settings. Research objectives were clearly defined following research hypotheses. Detail research objectives are:

- To evaluate which touchpoint has highest impact on loyalty of infant formula product brand recommenders in Thailand
  - For the highest impactful touchpoint, to identify which attribute has highest impact on loyalty of infant formula product brand recommenders in Thailand
- To investigate and confirm if emotional motivation has higher impact on loyalty of infant formula product brand recommenders in Thailand
- To determine which behavioral aspects of infant formula product brand recommender that implicate high loyalty characteristics

Sampling

Statistically, a representative sampling design is required to draw research implications at country level in Thailand. A total of 350 respondents nationwide were recruited for this Phase 2 research. Sampling design is illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Phase 2 Research – Sampling plan
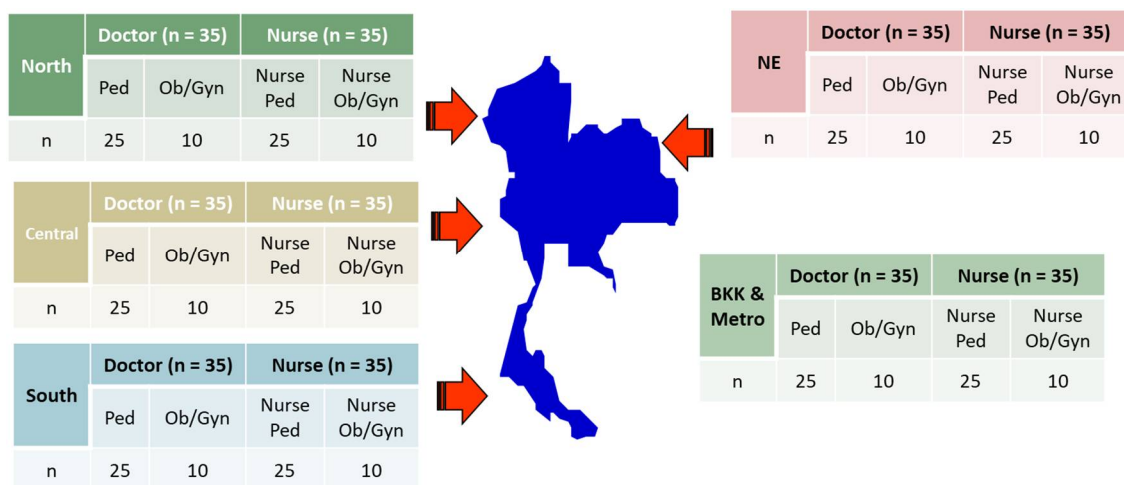
With this sampling plan;

- 175 physicians (pediatricians and Ob gynecologists) and 175 nurses (pediatric nurses and

  Ob nurses) were recruited and interviewed

  - o 125 pediatricians and 50 Ob gynecologists

  - o 125 pediatric nurses and 50 Ob nurses

- 5 regions were well covered across Thailand

Recruitment criteria are:

- Pediatricians, Ob gynecologists, pediatric nurses, and Ob nurses

- Respondents must have been practiced in their relevant specialty for at least 3 years

- Respondents must have been actively recommended any Phase 1 and Phase 2 infant

  formula product brand to mothers during the past 3 months

4.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection

Data collection for both Phase 1 & 2 was based on pre-recruitment arrangement with face-to-face

interviews conducted at respondent's own medical setting.

Recruitment criteria are:

- Pediatricians, Ob gynecologists, pediatric nurses, and Ob nurses

- Respondents must have been practiced in their relevant specialty for at least 3 years

- Respondents must have been actively recommended any Phase 1 and Phase 2 infant formula product brand to mothers during the past 3 months

Data analysis

In Phase 1, manual qualitative data analysis using content grid was used to identify all relevant attributes as pre-defined following objectives.

In Phase 2, a few major techniques were employed following customer loyalty framework using SPSS application as explained below:

- Correlation analysis: refers to the degree of relationship (or dependency) between two variables. Linear correlation refers to straight-line relationships between two variables. A correlation can range between -1 (perfect negative relationship) and +1 (perfect positive relationship), with 0 indicating no straight-line relationship. Correlation measures the extent to which variables:

    o covary

    o depend on one another

    o predict one another

  The extent of correlation between two variables, by convention, is denoted r, and the correlation between variable X and variable Y is indicated by r_{XY}.

Figure 4: Correlation scatterplot sample
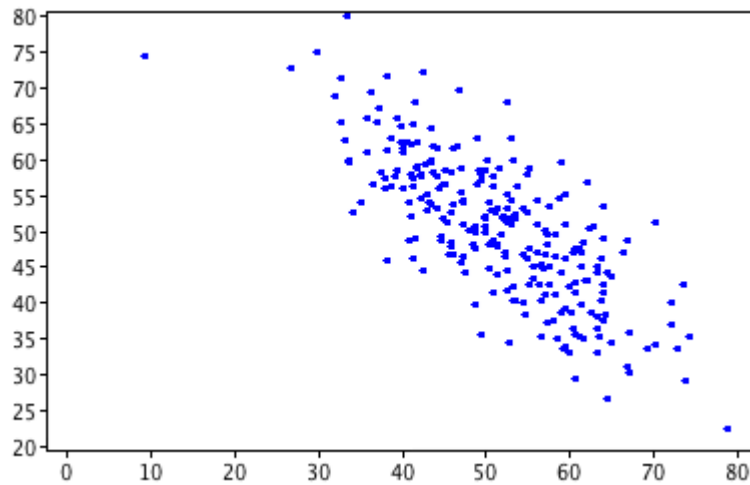
- Multi-variable regression analysis: Multi-variable regression is an extension of simple linear regression. It is used when we want to predict the value of a variable based on the value of two or more other variables. The variable we want to predict is called the dependent variable (or sometimes, the outcome, target or criterion variable). The variables we are using to predict the value of the dependent variable are called the independent variables (or sometimes, the predictor, explanatory or regressor variables). The multiple linear regression equation is as follows:

$$\hat{Y} = b_0 + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + \dots + b_p X_p,$$

where equation image indicator is the predicted or expected value of the dependent variable, X1 through Xp are p distinct independent or predictor variables, b0 is the value of Y when all of the independent variables (X1 through Xp) are equal to zero, and b1 through bp are the estimated regression coefficients. Each regression coefficient represents

the change in Y relative to a one unit change in the respective independent variable. In the multiple regression situation, b1, for example, is the change in Y relative to a one-unit change in X1, holding all other independent variables constant (i.e., when the remaining independent variables are held at the same value or are fixed). Again, statistical tests can be performed to assess whether each regression coefficient is significantly different from zero.

4.3 Limitations of Research

For Phase 1, the length of main questionnaire was estimated 30 minutes, but the actual survey in field took 15 more minutes to complete, a total of 45 minutes interview session. Target respondents were prompted and probed on each of every question to ensure all factors and attributes were captured during interview session. With several probing points, respondents became fatigue and could potentially diminish overall quality of interview outputs.

For Phase 2, the main limitation of the survey study was difficulty in physician recruitment following their very busy schedules. Sampling design of Phase 2 was also considered as big issue of this study survey, since recruiting 350 healthcare professional respondents in Thailand is considered very difficult and challenging, owning to high turn down rate nature of this respondent type. Furthermore, customer loyalty model questionnaire comprises of many rating questions, each question contains many attributes that require all respondents to proving rating scores. The interview process becomes repetitive in questions and could potentially diminish quality of rating inputs from respondents.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

In this chapter, results of both Phase 1 and Phase 2 will be discussed in detail, separately.

5.1 Phase 1 Survey Results

The expected outcomes from exploratory qualitative in-depth interview with physicians and nurses are the comprehensive lists of attributes of interest, as already highlighted in customer loyalty framework.

5.1.1 Touchpoints

From qualitative in-depth interviews, 4 major touchpoints of physicians and nurses on any infant formula product brand were discovered as highlighted in Table 1.

Table 1: Infant formula product brand touchpoints

List of touchpoints
1. Product
2. Sales representative detailing
3. Marketing activities and promotions
4. Sales manager and management visit

- Product: Some physicians and nurses have had direct experiences on some infant formula product brands for their own infants.

- Sales representative detailing: All infant formula product companies have invested in salesforce team in detailing product brand information to healthcare professionals (pediatric and OB) in the hospital channel, nationwide. Most pediatricians, Ob

gynecologists, pediatric nurses, and Ob nurses have been detailed on infant formula product information by product sales representatives from different companies. This is similar to pharmaceutical industry where product detailing to healthcare professionals play key commercial success factor. For infant formula products, most mothers do not switch brand but rather stick to the first brand usage unless certain side effect occurs and so first brand experience is very important in this business.

- Marketing activities and promotions: Most infant formula product companies invest in extensive sales and marketing activities to both healthcare professionals (as product recommender role) and mothers (as product user role). So many healthcare professionals have acquired infant formula product information from some of these sales and marketing activities from different channels.

- Sales manager and management visit: For some healthcare professionals who are selectively classified as high potential (high product recommendation rate) or being impactful product endorsers (senior key opinion leaders, for example), they are usually visited by infant formula product, sales manager and/or senior management of infant formula companies to establish strong relationship with. Product brand information detailing is usually one of the agendas of these management visits.

5.1.1.1 Product touchpoint

According to interviews with target healthcare professionals, a list of 9 product touchpoint attributes have been defined as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Product touchpoint attributes

Product touchpoint attributes
1. is a product that meet the mothers of infant and child up to 2 years' objectives in terms of product's nutrition more than the other brands
2. is more outstanding than other brands in terms of brain development benefits
3. is more outstanding than other brands in terms of physical development benefits
4. is more outstanding than other brands in terms of promoting immunity
5. is more outstanding than other brands in terms of having content and nutrition closed to breast milk
6. is more outstanding than other brands in terms of better digestive system (does not cause of the constipation or diarrhea)
7. The price is very reasonable with its nutrition quality worth the value for the money
8is an innovative product with continuous in research and development (R&D)
9. is a product for infant and child up to 2 years that has been most accepted from healthcare professionals

5.1.1.2 Sales representative detailing touchpoint attributes

According to interviews, sales representatives of infant formula products seem to have high impact

on healthcare professionals in terms of product information acquisition and also brand preference.

Sales representative detailing touchpoint attributes are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Sales representative detailing touchpoint attributes

Sales representative detailing touchpoint attributes
1. The sales rep has a good personality and well dressed
2. The sales rep is diligent and visits you on a regular basis
3. The sales rep knows your business needs
4. The sales rep gains confidence and trust from you
5. The sales rep has good knowledge of their own products and competitors' product
6. The sales rep can communicate with clear, precise and easy to understand messages
7. The sales rep can answer objections/handle problems when occur quickly
8. The sales rep gets back to you with the problem solving on the promised date/time (no delay)
9. The sales rep always provides correct and reliable information
10. The sales rep always provides updated inforamtion i.e. new product, price, promotion without asking and most of the info is very useful
11. The sales rep can be easily reached when needed
12. When changing the sales rep it does not affect or has very few affect the continuity of service
13. The sales rep comes to visit in appropriate time

5.1.1.3 Marketing activities and promotions touchpoint attributes

Giving limit salesforce of infant formula product companies, marketing and promotions are common tools used to reach target most healthcare professionals nationwide. Both below-the-line (BTL) and above-the-line (ATL) are common marketing tactics used by infant formula product companies to reach as many target healthcare professionals in Thailand, key attributes obtained from in-depth interviews as summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Marketing activities and promotions touchpoint attributes

Marketing activities and promotions touchpoint attributes
1. The company provides sufficient product samples for your patients
2. The company regularly organizes local product knowledge/medical education programs i.e. booth, exhibition, conference and seminar
3. The company regularly organizes oversea product knowledge/medical education programs i.e. booth, exhibition, conference and seminar
4. Most of local product knowledge/medical education programs i.e. booth, exhibition, conference and seminar are useful and interesting
5. Most of oversea product knowledge/medical education programs i.e. booth, exhibition, conference and seminar are useful and interesting
6. The company regularly organizes relationship marketing activities i.e. upcountry meeting, dining, celabration, new year gift, birthday gift etc
7. You are always impressed with most activities and always want to attend
8. The company regularly provides useful gimmicks
9. The company regularly provides product information/updated information to mothers/parents such as clinical papers, leaflets, brochures, etc.
10. The company regularly provides product information/updated information to healthcare professionals such as clinical papers, leaflets, brochures, etc.
11. The content of product information/updated information such as clinical papers, leaflets, brochures, etc are useful and credible
12. The company always organizes new product launch event every time it launches a new product
13. The company always organizes consumer marketing activities i.e. group meeting among pregnant women, families with children aged 0-6 years old
14. The company always advertises useful information in medical journals & publication

5.1.1.4 *Sales manager and management visit touchpoint attributes*

Sales manager and management visit touchpoint attributes gathered from in-depth interviews are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5: Sales manager and management visit touchpoint attributes

Sales manager and management visit touchpoint attributes
1. Sales manager or sales supervisor's visit frequency is appropriate
2. Sales manager or sales supervisor's visit helps to strengthen the relationship with me
3. Sales manager or sales supervisor's visit makes me feel impressed and honored
4. Sales manager or sales supervisor follows up/helps sales rep to make decision effectively/solve any problems
5. Sales manager or sales supervisor's visit helps improving the performance of sales rep
6. Sales manager or sales supervisor's visit does not disturb me

5.1.2 Emotional motivation

Different physicians and nurses tend to express their emotional motivation in recommending any particular infant formula product brand in different ways, as summarized in Table 6.

Table 6: Emotional motivation attributes

List of emotional motivation attributes
1. I can explain the detail about Brand X to others
2. Company of Brand X is a company with good image
3. If Brand X were a man, we would be friends
4. I feel attached to Brand X
5. I feel pround of being Brand X's user/recommender
6. I am Brand X's recommender because other people around me are
7. I trust in Brand X
8. I feel that Brand X is more than an infant/follow on formula for infant and child up to 2 years
9. When I think about infant/follow on formula for infant and child up to 2 years product, Brand X is the first company that comes to my mind
10. There is an enduring connection between Brand X and me

5.1.3 Rational motivation

Rationally, physicians and nurses focus on 4 key attributes when it comes to their rational motivation in recommending preference of specific infant formula product brand as highlighted in Table 7.

Table 7: Rational motivation attributes

List of emotional motivation attributes
1. Overall infant formula product performance
2. Value for money
3. Response to my need
4. Overall quality

5.1.4 Brand perceptions

Brand perceptions can be further sub categorized into 3 different pillars, which are Brand feelings, Brand image, and Brand personality.

5.1.4.1 Brand feelings

How do physicians and nurses feel towards their preferred (or loyal) infant formula brand are highlighted as attributes in Table 8.

Table 8: Brand feelings attributes

List of brand feeling attributes
1. ... makes me proud to recommend the best product to my patients
2. ... makes me proud to recommend the best product to my colleagues
3. ... makes me proud to recommend the most value for money product to my patients
4. ... makes me proud to recommend the most value for money product to my colleagues
5. ... makes me proud that I have done my job as healthcare professional
6. ... makes me feel being a special person of brand owner
7. ... makes me proud that I recemmend the best product to infant and child up to 2 years
8. ...makes me proud to be a healthcare professional with true knowledge/expertise in infant formula product for infant and child up to 2 years

5.1.4.2 Brand image

Most participated physicians and nurses tend to have similar corporate brand images on infant formula product companies that leads to their brand loyalty and preference, as highlighted in Table 9.

Table 9: Brand image attributes

List of brand image attributes
1. ...has good infant formula product brand for infant and child up to 2 years with completely full of nutrition
2. ...has good infant formula product brand for infant and child up to 2 years with good safety profile
3. ...has a premium brand that is worth the value for the money
4. ...has an innovative product with continuous development
5. ...is a leader in premium infant formula product brand for infant and child up to 2 years
6. ... is outstanding in supportive by medical documents
7. ...is outstanding in research and development
8. ...is outstanding in building relationship with healthcare professional (Doctors and nurses)
9. ...supports academic seminar, meeting
10. ...sponsors doctor/nurse to attend academic seminar, meeting
10. ... has credible/trustworthy product

5.1.4.3 Brand personality

Top most 9 brand personalities mentioned from respondents during in-depth interviews were collected and listed in Table 10.

Table 10: Brand personality attributes

List of brand personality attributes
1. Friendly
2. Trustworthy
3. Self-confident
4. Informative
5. Leadership
6. Creative
7. Enthusiastic
8. Professional
9. Aligns with industry compliance

5.1.5 Loyalty behavior

The last major element of customer loyalty framework, loyalty behavior, is defined as a set of common behaviors of healthcare professionals as loyal recommenders of any specific infant formula product brand(s). Feedbacks gathered from participating physicians and nurses during exploratory interviews reveal a list of 8 common loyalty behaviors as shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Loyalty behaviors

Loyalty behavior attributes
1. Recommend ....'s infant formula product for infant and child up to 2 years to your patients
2. Recommend ....'s infant formula product for infant and child up to 2 years to your colleagues
3. Have used or will definitely use ....'s infant formula product for infant and child up to 2 years to your own child
4. Always convince your patients who prefer other infant formula brand the better the benefits of ....'s infant formula product for infant and child up to 2 years
5. Always convince your colleagues who prefer other infant formula brand the better the benefits of ....'s infant formula product for infant and child up to 2 years
6. Always participate in all activities that will be held by brand owner? Of ......
7. Remain a regular user and/or recommended of ....'s infant formula product for infant and child up to 2 years even if the price will be increased
8. Always provide product samples of ....'s infant formula product for infant and child up to 2 years as first choice to your patients when possible

5.2 Phase 2 Survey Results

Complete lists of attributes of all elements as defined in customer loyalty framework gathered ad synthesized from Phase 1 would be then plugged in to Phase 2 questionnaire design for quantitative survey study. For benchmarking reason, all 6 major manufacturers and marketers of infant formula products in Thailand are included in the main questionnaire for agreement rating exercises throughout interview session:

- Abbott

- Dumex (Danone)

- Mead Johnson

- Nestle

- Snow

- Wyeth

The results of Phase 2 quantitative research study are summarized as follow.

5.2.1 Touchpoint

5.2.1.1 Product touchpoint

Data analysis reveals two attributes have significantly higher impact on overall product touchpoint, which are "product that meet the mothers of infant and child up to 2 years' objectives in terms of product's nutrition more than the other brands" and "product that is more outstanding than other

brands in terms of physical development benefits" attributes. Impacts on certain touchpoint also implies positive impact on loyalty degree on infant formula brand recommending behaviors. The impact is calculated as loyalty index, using multi-variable regression analysis as explained in Methodology Chapter.

Loyalty index calculation of product touchpoint is summarized in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Product touchpoint result summary
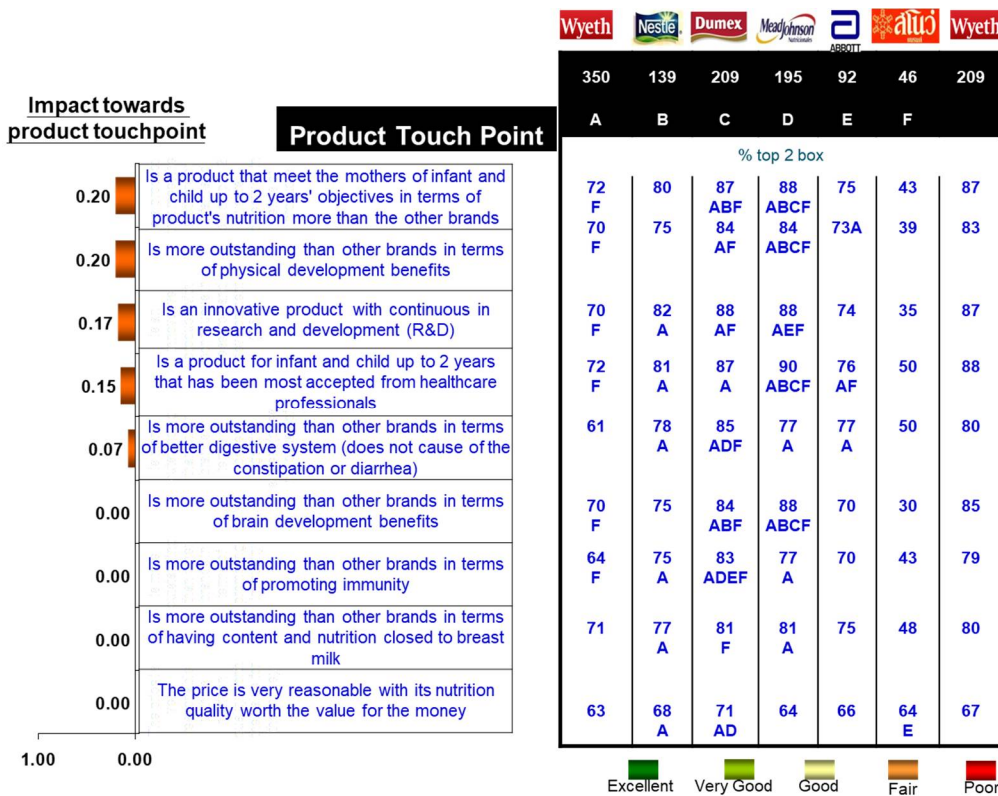
5.2.1.2 Sales representative detailing touchpoint

Of total 13 attributes, only 6 attributes have shown certain impact on sales representative detailing touchpoint. The other 7 attributes have nearly zero impact, as calculated by loyalty index score. For conciseness, only 6 attributes with certain impact on sales representative detailing touchpoint and so loyalty behaviors are shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Sales representative detailing touchpoint result summary
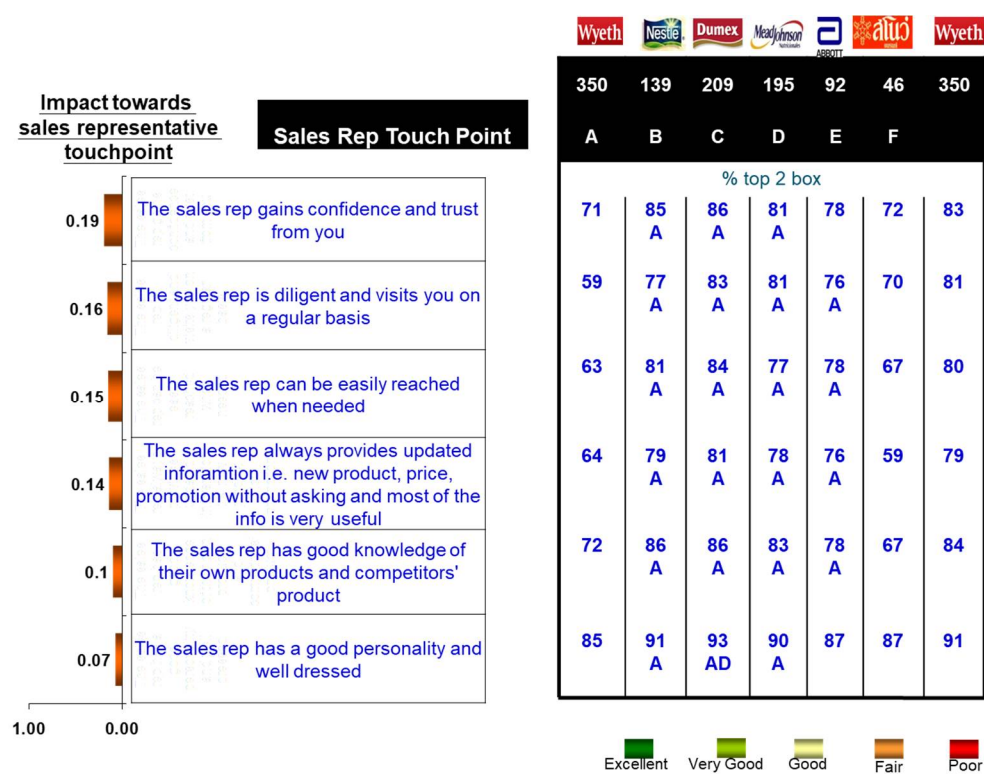
5.2.1.3 Marketing activities and promotions touchpoint

Of total 14 attributes, only 7 attributes have shown certain impact on marketing activities and promotions touchpoint. The other 7 attributes have nearly zero impact, as calculated by loyalty

index score. For conciseness, only 7 attributes with certain impact on marketing activities and promotions touchpoint and so loyalty behaviors are shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Marketing activities and promotions touchpoint result summary
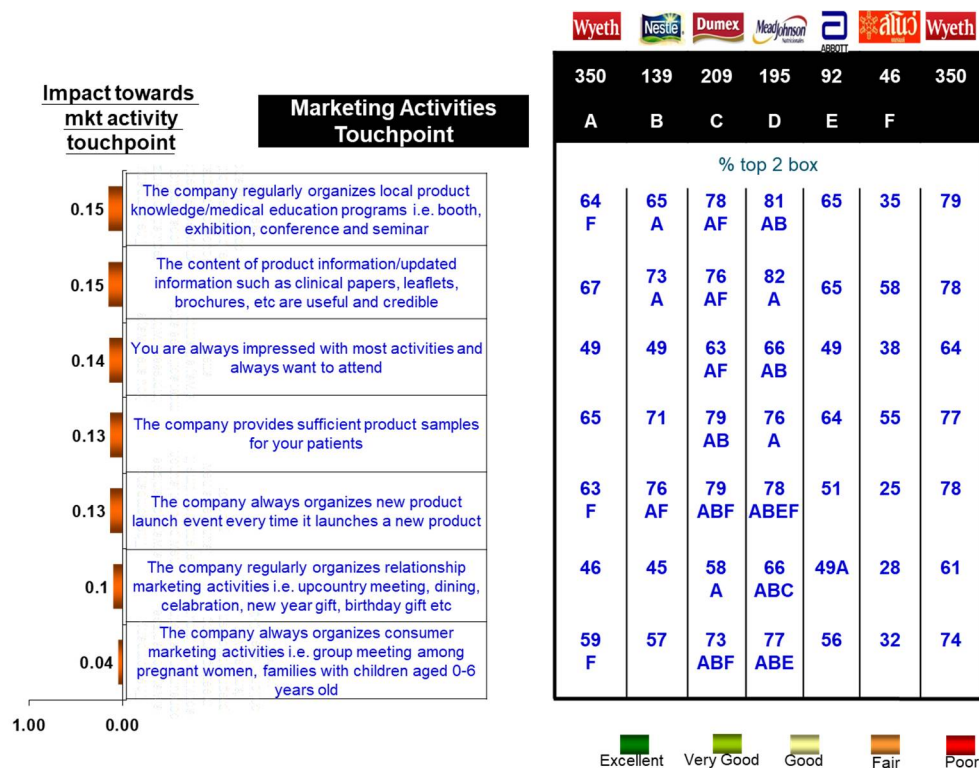
5.2.1.4 Sales manager and management visit touchpoint

Add-on values of manager/management visits to sales representative detailing visit to solve any issue is mostly expected from physicians and nurses, and this attribute has highest impact on sales manager and management visit touchpoint/loyalty behaviors. Results are concluded in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Sales manager and management visit touchpoint result summary

	Wyeth	Nestlé	Dumex	MeadJohnson	ABBOTT	อัลป	Wyeth
	350	139	209	195	92	46	350
	A	B	C	D	E	F	
Impact towards sales manager touchpoint	**Sales Manager Touch Point**						

Impact	Sales Manager Touch Point	A	B	C	D	E	F	
		% top 2 box						
0.24	Sales manager or sales supervisor follows up/helps sales rep to make decision effectively/solve any problems	56	67 A	61 A	67	60 A	62	63
0.21	Sales manager or sales supervisor's visit makes me feel impressed and honored	63	68	69 A	70	64	58	69
0.10	Sales manager or sales supervisor's visit does not disturb me	68	71 A	71 A	75	67	68	72
0.07	Sales manager or sales supervisor's visit frequency is appropriate	50	62 A	61 AE	62 A	50 A	55	61
0.07	Sales manager or sales supervisor's visit helps to strengthen the relationship with me	58	68	60 AE	65A	56	63	62
0.00	Sales manager or sales supervisor's visit helps improving the performance of sales rep	60	68	67 A	70	59	63	68

1.00   0.00

Excellent   Very Good   Good   Fair   Poor

5.2.2 Emotional motivation

The three keywords of "attached", "proud", and "trust" are proven to have highest impact on emotional motivation of healthcare professional on their loyalty behaviors of infant formula product brand recommending as shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Emotional motivation result summary

Figure 9: Emotional motivation result summary

Emotional Motivation Indicators		Wyeth	Nestlé	Dumex	MeadJohnson	Abbott	dutch	Wyeth
		350	139	209	195	92	46	350
		A	B	C	D	E	F	
		% top 2 box						
0.88	I feel attached to ….	64	68	77 A	75 A	64	59	75
0.83	I feel pround of being ….'s user/recommender	55 F	55 A	65 A	65 AB	55	46	64
0.81	I trust in ….and its products & services	75	83 A	82 A	89 A	76 A	67	85
0.8	If ….were a man, we would be friends	75 F	76	80 AEF	82 ABE	75	72	80
0.78	company …is the first company that comes to my mind	70 F	79 A	86 A	86 AB	72	54	85
0.77	There is an enduring connection between ….and me	69	68	78	49 AB	66	65	63
0.76	… is a company with good image	85 F	86	92 AF	93 ABE	83	70	92
0.73	I am ….'s recommender because other people around me are	50	46	62 A	58 A	52	39	59
0.72	is more than an infant/follow on formula for infant and child up	56	64	65 A	71 A	50	41	67
0.71	I can explain the detail to others	73	76	79 A	84 A	73	61	81

1.00   0.00

Totally agree   Somewhat agree   Neither agree nor disagree   Somewhat disagree   Totally disagree

5.2.3 Rational motivation

Infant formula product brand that responses to the need has significant impact on loyalty index among participating healthcare professionals in this study survey, as highlighted in Figure 10.

Figure 10: Rational motivation result summary

	Wyeth	Nestlé	Dumex	MeadJohnson	ABBOTT	Cute	Wyeth
	350	139	209	195	92	46	350
	A	B	C	D	E	F	
% top 2 box							
Response to my need	57	6 AF	75 AF	77 AB	71 A	43	75
Value for Money	65	68	74 AF	72 A	62	50	72
Overall Quality	76 F	81 A	83 AF	89 AC	79 A	59	85

Rational motivation Indicators

- Response to my need — 0.83
- Value for Money — 0.75
- Overall Quality — 0.70

Totally agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree Totally disagree

5.2.4 Brand perceptions

5.2.4.1 Brand image

As for healthcare professionals, clinical data is important for them to prescribe any medical products to patients, and similarly it is also important for recommending any infant formula product brand to mothers with infants aged 0-2 years. Following their nature as healthcare professionals, infant formula brand with rich clinical data support, and proven extensive R&D investment would gain high attractions on product recommending among healthcare professionals. Brand image summary is provided in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Brand image result summary

Impact towards brand image | **Brand Perceptions: Image**

Brand	Wyeth	Nestle	Dumex	MeadJohnson	Abbott	ดูแล Wyeth	Wyeth
	350	139	209	195	92	46	350
	A	B	C	D	E	F	

% top 2 box

Impact	Brand Perceptions: Image	A	B	C	D	E	F	
0.84	… is outstanding in supportive by medical documents	74 F	83 A	89 AF	91 ABE	74	52	89
0.81	…is outstanding in research and development	72 F	85 A	89 AF	89 ABE	75	33	88
0.81	…has an innovative product with continuous development	77 F	88 A	91 AF	92 ABEF	77	46	91
0.78	…is a leader in premium IFFO product brand for infant and child up to 2 years	75 F	81	89 AEF	93 ABCEF	69 F	35	90
0.76	… has credible/trustworthy product	85	89	93 AF	95 ABE	88	80	93
0.74	…is outstanding in building relationship with healthcare professional (Doctors and nurses)	74	84 A	91 A	90 AB	82	70	90
0.72	…has good IFFO product brand for infant and child up to 2 years with completely full of nutrition	88 F	89	91 AF	96 AB	90 A	67	93
0.71	…has good IFFO product brand for infant and child up to 2 years with good safety profile	89	91	91	96 ABE	88	72	93
0.71	…supports academic seminar, meeting	69 F	74 A	79 AF	85 ABE	70	41	81
0.64	…has a premium brand that is worth the value for the money	72 F	74	81 ABF	82	71 AF	33	81
0.61	…sponsors doctor/nurse to attend academic seminar, meeting	62 F	65A	76A	79AB	58	37	77

1.00   0.00

Excellent | Very Good | Good | Fair | Poor

5.2.4.2 Brand feeling

Feeling proud of recommending particular infant formula product brand to colleagues and mothers is proven as the most impactful feeling towards infant formula brand loyalty behavior among recommenders, as shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Brand feeling summary

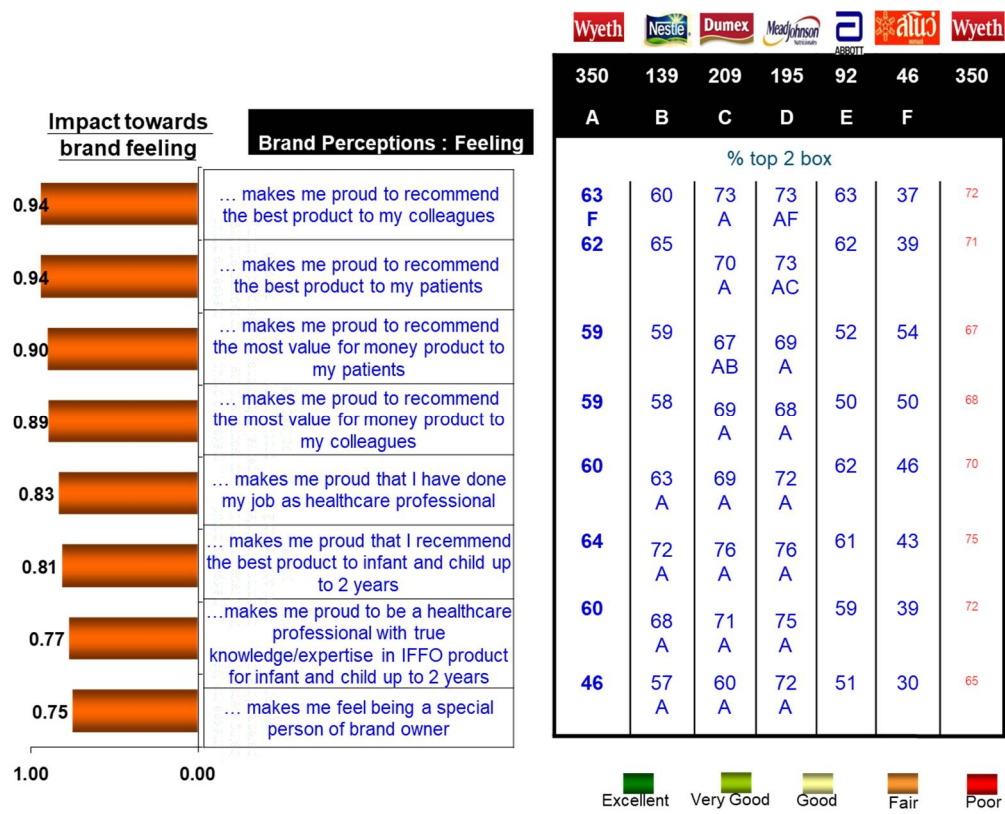| Impact towards brand feeling	Brand Perceptions : Feeling	Wyeth 350 A	Nestlé 139 B	Dumex 209 C	MeadJohnson 195 D	Abbott 92 E	46 F	Wyeth 350
		% top 2 box						
0.94	… makes me proud to recommend the best product to my colleagues	63 F	60	73 A	73 AF	63	37	72
0.94	… makes me proud to recommend the best product to my patients	62	65	70 A	73 AC	62	39	71
0.90	… makes me proud to recommend the most value for money product to my patients	59	59	67 AB	69 A	52	54	67
0.89	… makes me proud to recommend the most value for money product to my colleagues	59	58	69 A	68 A	50	50	68
0.83	… makes me proud that I have done my job as healthcare professional	60	63 A	69 A	72 A	62	46	70
0.81	… makes me proud that I recommend the best product to infant and child up to 2 years	64	72 A	76 A	76 A	61	43	75
0.77	…makes me proud to be a healthcare professional with true knowledge/expertise in IFFO product for infant and child up to 2 years	60	68 A	71 A	75 A	59	39	72
0.75	… makes me feel being a special person of brand owner	46	57 A	60 A	72 A	51	30	65

1.00   0.00

Excellent   Very Good   Good   Fair   Poor

5.2.4.3 Brand personality

Leadership, which implies the leading infant formula brand with highest share in the market; and infant formula product brand with creativity in product R&D and positioning are proven to be the most impactful brand personalities accounted among healthcare professionals on their loyal recommending behaviors as summarized in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Brand personality result summary

	Wyeth	Nestlé	Dumex	MeadJohnson	ABBOTT	อีนฟาแลค	Wyeth
	350	139	209	195	92	46	350
	A	B	C	D	E	F	
% top 2 box							
Leadership	73 F	83 A	85 A	89 ABCE	77	46	86
Creative	71 F	78 A	88 AF	87 ABE	67	50	87
Informative	72 F	82 A	89 AF	88 ABE	77	43	88
Professional	82 F	85 A	88 A	92 ABC	83	63	89
Enthusiastic	71	83 A	87 A	89 AB	79 A	63	87
Self-confident	83	88 A	91 A	94 ABE	86	72	92
Trustworthy	87	93 A	91 A	92 A	88	76	91
Friendly	87	91	92 AE	92	92	85	91
Aligns with industry compliance	76	80	79	80	76	63	79

Impact towards brand personality:
- Leadership 0.88
- Creative 0.88
- Informative 0.85
- Professional 0.83
- Enthusiastic 0.82
- Self-confident 0.81
- Trustworthy 0.80
- Friendly 0.75
- Aligns with industry compliance 0.64

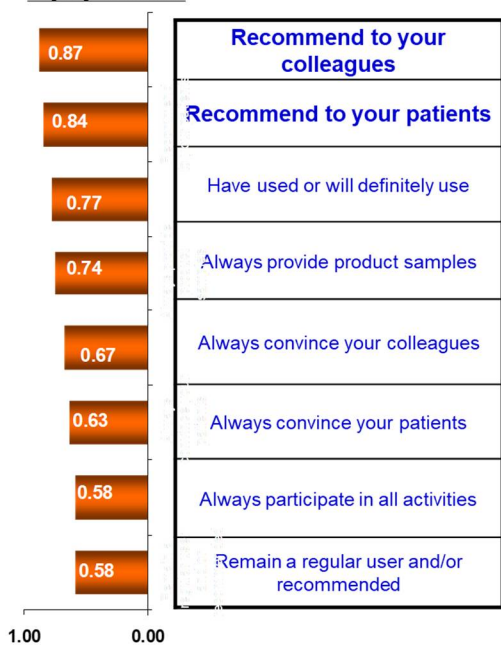Excellent | Very Good | Good | Fair | Poor

5.2.5 Loyalty behaviors

Interestingly, the most obvious behavior that implies infant formula brand loyalty of healthcare professionals is when they actually recommend any particular infant formula brand to their own colleagues. That is, if a pediatrician recommends Product X to her colleagues in the hospital, then we can conclude that this pediatrician is loyal to Product X. Loyalty behavior results are concluded in Figure 14 below.

Figure 14: Loyalty behavior result summary

Loyalty Indicator

| Loyalty Indicator		Wyeth 350 A %	Nestle 139 B %	Dumex 209 C %	MeadJohnson 195 D %	ABBOTT 92 E %	aluc 46 F %	Wyeth 350 %
0.87	Recommend to your colleagues	72 F	75 A	81 AF	80	65	57	80
0.84	Recommend to your patients	72	74 A	81 A	79	73	67	79
0.77	Have used or will definitely use	74 F	76	83 A	87 AE	70	59	84
0.74	Always provide product samples	66	66	78 A	79 A	65	61	78
0.67	Always convince your colleagues	48	41	56 A	60 A	51	37	57
0.63	Always convince your patients	47	40	54	54 A	50	37	53
0.58	Always participate in all activities	59	65	69 AF	68 AB	62	43	68
0.58	Remain a regular user and/or recommended	66	72	72 A	75 A	68	52	73

1.00   0.00

Definitely will | Probably will | Not sure | Probably will not | Definitely will not

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

Taking all multiple variables (attributes) into the context of loyalty behaviors, calculating and assigning loyalty indices to all relevant variables, we can derive customer loyalty framework summary as shown in Figure 15.

Figure 15: Conclusive results of Customer Loyalty Framework
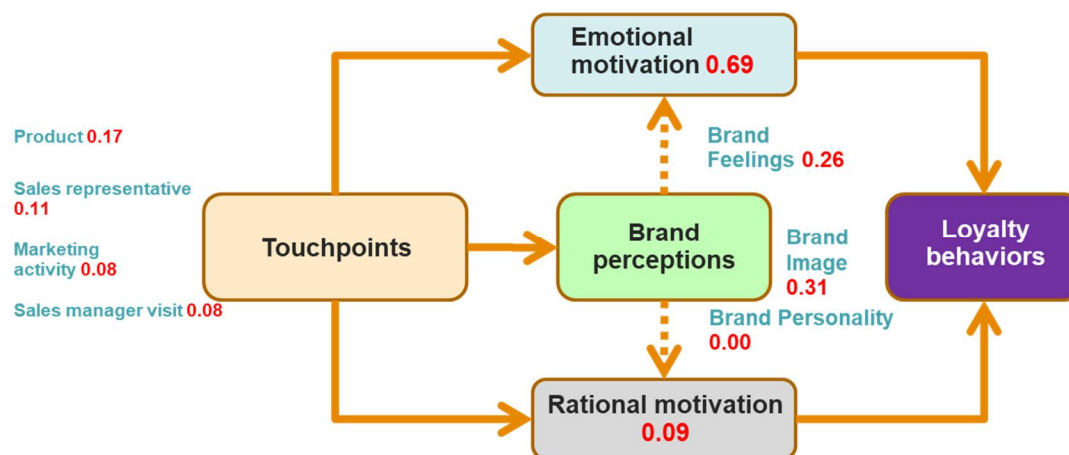
Summary findings:

1. Refer to Hypothesis 1: In Thailand, emotional motivation has proven significantly higher impact on loyalty behaviors of healthcare professionals in terms of infant formula product brand recommending to mothers as opposed to rational motivation. In fact, advertising and communication themes launched to target healthcare professionals in Thailand by infant formula companies should be focusing on emotional motivational elements, and less on rational motivational elements to promote brand specific loyalty behaviors.

2. Refer to Hypothesis 2: Healthcare professionals in Thailand are highly influenced by different touchpoints toward infant formula product brands, but at different degrees of

impact. The customer loyalty framework suggests that own experiences on infant formula product brand (both direct and indirect experiences) play highest impact how to they become loyalty to the brand and recommend the brand to other people. The second most important touchpoint is sales representative visit touchpoint, of which being claimed as mostly preferred product information channel by many healthcare professionals. This finding confirms the fact that infant formula companies in Thailand need to stay focusing on salesforce effectiveness in healthcare professional segment, as relationship established between sales representatives and healthcare professionals play key to promote infant formula brand loyalty.

3. Marketing activities and promotions, and sales manager/management visit to healthcare professionals are equally important touchpoints directly impact on brand perceptions of healthcare professionals that result to both emotional and rational motivation. Though different touchpoints account for different degree of impact on infant formula product brand loyalty, it is suggested to invest in all touchpoints following specific company business strategy to ensure customer loyalty is well developed and maintained.

4. How to establish good brand image is proven to be the most important branding strategy in infant formula market, since brand image has highest impact on loyalty behaviors as suggested in customer loyalty model followed by brand feeling. In fact, both brand image and brand feeling can be promoted together under pre-defined theme that are well aligned to the total brand strategy. On another hand, brand personality is not impactful to loyalty behaviors in infant formula market and can be ignored or less prioritized in terms of total branding strategy.

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APPENDICES

Phase 1: Questionnaire

Qualitative in-depth interview guideline

1. Which sources have you acquired product brand information of any infant formula brand during the past 6 months? By source, it could be media, publication, people, or any communication channel. Anything else? **PROBE FULLY**

    a. For each source, HOW have you acquired product information? Anything else? **PROBE FULLY**

    b. For each source, WHAT kind of product information have you acquired? Anything else? **PROBE FULLY**

2. How do you FEEL when recommending any particular infant formula product brand to mothers with infant aged 0-2 years? And why do you feel that? **PROBE FULLY**

3. What reasons why do you recommend any particular infant formula product brand to mothers with infant aged 0-2 years? **PROBE FULLY**

4. For the infant formula brand(s) that you have recommended to mothers with infant aged 0-2 years old during the past 6 months, which benefits or attributes of the brand that you like so that you recommend the brand to mothers? **PROBE FULLY**

5. How do you define personality for each of every infant formula product that you are aware of? **PROBE FULLY**

6. Which recommending behaviors do you believe the most common ones that you normally do at your practice when recommending any infant formula brand to mothers with infant aged 0-2 years old? **PROBE FULLY**

Phase 2: Questionnaire

Quantitative questionnaire

1. From the following questions, I will ask you to evaluate 3 companies only to save your time, which are _____ (randomly selected 3 companies from a total 6 companies in the list)

Table 12: Infant formula companies in Thailand

Company	Company 1 _____	Company 2 _____	Company 3 _____
Wyeth	1	1	1
Nestle	1	2	3
Dumex	1	2	3
Mead Johnson	1	2	3
Abbott	1	2	3
Snow	1	2	3
Other: specify _____	1	2	3
Other: specify _____	1	2	3

2. How would you rate the <u>overall performance</u> of _____, including all of the products, services, and support from the company? Would you say it is _____? (S/C)

3. Consider ____'s products, how would you rate ___ in terms of <u>value for money</u>?

4. From your experience, how would you rate ___ in terms of well <u>response to your need</u>?

5. Consider ____'s products, how would you rate ___ in terms of <u>quality</u>?

Figure 16: Rating card for Q2 – Q5

	Company 1 _____	Company 2 _____	Company 3 _____
Excellent	5	5	5
Very good	4	4	4
Good	3	3	3
Fair	2	2	2
Poor	1	1	1

6. [LOYALTY BEHAVIOR] How likely is it for you to _____? (Use Loyalty Behavior Self

Completion Sheet)

- Definitely will – 5

- Probably will - 4

- Not sure -3

- Probably will not - 2

- Definitely will not - 1

Figure 17: Loyalty Behavior Self Completion Sheet

Loyalty behavior attributes	Company 1	Company 2	Company 3
1. Recommend ....'s infant formula product for infant and child up to 2 years to your patients			
2. Recommend ....'s infant formula product for infant and child up to 2 years to your colleagues			
3. Have used or will definitely use ....'s infant formula product for infant and child up to 2 years to your own child			
4. Always convince your patients who prefer other infant formula brand the better the benefits of ....'s infant formula product for infant and child up to 2 years			
5. Always convince your colleagues who prefer other infant formula brand the better the benefits of ....'s infant formula product for infant and child up to 2 years			
6. Always participate in all activities that will be held by brand owner? Of			
7. Remain a regular user and/or recommended of ....'s infant formula product for infant and child up to 2 years even if the price will be increased			
8. Always provide product samples of ....'s infant formula product for infant and child up to 2 years as first choice to your patients when possible			

7. [EMOTIONAL MOTIVATION] Now, I will read out some statements that explain your feeling towards IFFO companies. Please tell me how you agree or disagree with each statement.

- Totally agree - 5

- Somewhat agree - 4

- Neither agree or disagree - 3

- Somewhat agree - 2

- Totally agree – 1

Figure 18: Emotional Motivation Self Completion Sheet

List of emotional motivation attributes	Company 1	Company 2	Company 3
1. I can explain the detail about Brand X to others			
2. Company of Brand X is a company with good image			
3. If Brand X were a man, we would be friends			
4. I feel attached to Brand X			
5. I feel pround of being Brand X's user/recommender			
6. I am Brand X's recommender because other people around me are			
7. I trust in Brand X			
8. I feel that Brand X is more than an infant/follow on formula for infant and child up to 2 years			
9. When I think about infant/follow on formula for infant and child up to 2 years product, Brand X is the first company that comes to my mind			
10. There is an enduring connection between Brand X and me			

8. [BRAND IMAGE] Now, I will read out some statements that explain image of IFFO companies. Please tell me how you agree or disagree with each statement. (S/C for each statement)

- Totally agree – 5

- Somewhat agree – 4

- Neither agree or disagree – 3

- Somewhat agree – 2

- Totally agree – 1

Figure 19: Brand Image Self Completion Sheet

List of brand image attributes	Company 1	Company 2	Company 3
1. ...has good infant formula product brand for infant and child up to 2 years with completely full of nutrition			
2. ...has good infant formula product brand for infant and child up to 2 years with good safety profile			
3. ...has a premium brand that is worth the value for the money			
4. ...has an innovative product with continuous development			
5. ...is a leader in premium infant formula product brand for infant and child up to 2 years			
6. ... is outstanding in supportive by medical documents			
7. ...is outstanding in research and development			
8. ...is outstanding in building relationship with healthcare professional (Doctors and nurses)			
9. ...supports academic seminar, meeting			
10. ...sponsors doctor/nurse to attend academic seminar, meeting			
10. ... has credible/trustworthy product			

9. [BRAND PERSONALITY] Now, I will read out some statements that explain characteristics of IFFO companies. Please tell me how you agree or disagree with each statement. (S/C for each statement)

- Totally agree – 5

- Somewhat agree – 4

- Neither agree or disagree – 3

- Somewhat agree – 2

- Totally agree – 1

Figure 20: Brand Personality Self Completion Sheet

List of brand personality attributes	Company 1	Company 2	Company 3
1. Friendly			
2. Trustworthy			
3. Self-confident			
4. Informative			
5. Leadership			
6. Creative			
7. Enthusiastic			
8. Professional			
9. Aligns with industry compliance			

10. [BRAND FEELING] Now, I will read out some statements that describe how people feel about IFFO companies. Please tell me how you agree or disagree with each statement. (S/C for each statement)

- Totally agree – 5

- Somewhat agree – 4

- Neither agree or disagree – 3

- Somewhat agree – 2

- Totally agree – 1

Figure 21: Brand Feeling Self Completion Sheet

List of brand feeling attributes	Company 1	Company 2	Company 3
1. … makes me proud to recommend the best product to my patients			
2. … makes me proud to recommend the best product to my colleagues			
3. … makes me proud to recommend the most value for money product to my patients			
4. … makes me proud to recommend the most value for money product to my colleagues			
5. … makes me proud that I have done my job as healthcare professional			
6. … makes me feel being a special person of brand owner			
7. … makes me proud that I recemmend the best product to infant and child up to 2 years			
8. …makes me proud to be a healthcare professional with true knowledge/expertise in infant formula product for infant and child up to 2 years			

11. [SALES REPRESENTATIVE TOUCHPOINT] How would you rate the sales representative who you have contacted to in terms of the following? (S/C)

- Excellent – 5

- Very good – 4

- Good – 3

- Fair – 2

- Poor – 1

Figure 22: Sales Representative Touchpoint Self Completion Sheet

Sales representative detailing touchpoint attributes	Company 1	Company 2	Company 3
1. The sales rep has a good personality and well dressed			
2. The sales rep is diligent and visits you on a regular basis			
3. The sales rep knows your business needs			
4. The sales rep gains confidence and trust from you			
5. The sales rep has good knowledge of their own products and competitors' product			
6. The sales rep can communicate with clear, precise and easy to understand messages			
7. The sales rep can answer objections/handle problems when occur quickly			
8. The sales rep gets back to you with the problem solving on the promised date/time (no delay)			
9. The sales rep always provides correct and reliable information			
10. The sales rep always provides updated inforamtion i.e. new product, price, promotion without asking and most of the info is very useful			
11. The sales rep can be easily reached when needed			
12. When changing the sales rep it does not affect or has very few affect the continuity of service			
13. The sales rep comes to visit in appropriate time			

12. [MARKETING TOUCHPOINT] How would you rate the overall performance during the past 12 months in terms of marketing activities, both academic and entertainment activities provided by _____? (S/C)

- Excellent – 5

- Very good – 4

- Good – 3

- Fair – 2

- Poor – 1

Figure 23: Marketing Touchpoint Self Completion Sheet

Marketing activities and promotions touchpoint attributes	Company 1	Company 2	Company 3
1. The company provides sufficient product samples for your patients			
2. The company regularly organizes local product knowledge/medical education programs i.e. booth, exhibition, conference and seminar			
3. The company regularly organizes oversea product knowledge/medical education programs i.e. booth, exhibition, conference and seminar			
4. Most of local product knowledge/medical education programs i.e. booth, exhibition, conference and seminar are useful and interesting			
5. Most of oversea product knowledge/medical education programs i.e. booth, exhibition, conference and seminar are useful and interesting			
6. The company regularly organizes relationship marketing activities i.e. upcountry meeting, dining, celabration, new year gift, birthday gift etc			
7. You are always impressed with most activities and always want to attend			
8. The company regularly provides useful gimmicks			
9. The company regularly provides product information/updated information to mothers/parents such as clinical papers, leaflets, brochures, etc.			
10. The company regularly provides product information/updated information to healthcare professionals such as clinical papers, leaflets, brochures, etc.			
11. The content of product information/updated information such as clinical papers, leaflets, brochures, etc are useful and credible			
12. The company always organizes new product launch event every time it launches a new product			
13. The company always organizes consumer marketing activities i.e. group meeting among pregnant women, families with children aged 0-6 years old			
14. The company always advertises useful information in medical journals & publication			

13. [PRODUCT TOUCHPOINT] How would you rate the overall performance of _____'s

infant formula product? (S/C)

- Excellent – 5

- Very good – 4

- Good – 3

- Fair – 2

- Poor – 1

Figure 24: Product Touchpoint Self Completion Sheet

Product touchpoint attributes	Company 1	Company 2	Company 3
1. is a product that meet the mothers of infant and child up to 2 years' objectives in terms of product's nutrition more than the other brands			
2. is more outstanding than other brands in terms of brain development benefits			
3. is more outstanding than other brands in terms of physical development benefits			
4. is more outstanding than other brands in terms of promoting immunity			
5. is more outstanding than other brands in terms of having content and nutrition closed to breast milk			
6. is more outstanding than other brands in terms of better digestive system (does not cause of the constipation or diarrhea)			
7. The price is very reasonable with its nutrition quality worth the value for the money			
8is an innovative product with continuous in research and development (R&D)			
9. is a product for infant and child up to 2 years that has been most accepted from healthcare professionals			

14. [SALES MANAGER] How would you rate the overall performance of sales manager, or

sales supervisor's visit of _____?

- Excellent – 5

- Very good – 4

- Good – 3

- Fair – 2

- Poor – 1

Figure 25: Sales Manager Touchpoint Self Completion Sheet

Sales manager and management visit touchpoint attributes	Company 1	Company 2	Company 3
1. Sales manager or sales supervisor's visit frequency is appropriate			
2. Sales manager or sales supervisor's visit helps to strengthen the relationship with me			
3. Sales manager or sales supervisor's visit makes me feel impressed and honored			
4. Sales manager or sales supervisor follows up/helps sales rep to make decision effectively/solve any problems			
5. Sales manager or sales supervisor's visit helps improving the performance of sales rep			
6. Sales manager or sales supervisor's visit does not disturb me			