

Summary paper: Influences of the Promotion Mix on Brand Love, Brand Loyalty, and Word-Of-Mouth: Evidence from Online Fashion Retail in Thailand

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Abstract

Napontun et al. (2024) investigates the relationship between components of the promotion mix and brand love, and how brand love subsequently affects brand loyalty and word-of-mouth in the online fashion retail sector in Thailand. The study applies the Tri-component Attitude Model and utilizes Integrated Generalized Structured Component Analysis (IGSCA) to analyze data from 276 Generation Z participants in Khon Kaen Province. Key Findings are presented as follows:

1. Advertising, personal selling, and sales promotion significantly influence brand love, while public relations and sponsored content do not show a significant impact.
2. Brand love has a strong influence on brand loyalty ($\beta = .617$) and word-of-mouth ($\beta = .597$).
3. Gender differences are observed: For males, advertising and personal selling drive brand love. For females, sales promotion is the primary factor influencing brand love.
4. Necessary Condition Analysis (NCA) indicates that advertising and personal selling are essential for fostering brand love, loyalty, and word-of-mouth.

Keywords:

Brand Love, Brand Loyalty, Online Fashion, Retail, Promotion Mix

Research Summary

The paper (Napontun et al., 2024) highlights the rapid growth of Thailand's online fashion retail sector, which saw an 85.8% increase, reaching 505 billion THB in 2023. This growth has intensified competition, prompting brands to seek strategies that foster brand love as a means to achieve competitive advantage.

The authors emphasize the importance of brand love in driving brand loyalty and positive word-of-mouth, which are crucial for reducing costs and increasing customer retention. While previous research has extensively explored the outcomes of brand love, little attention has been given to how the promotion mix influences its formation. This study addresses this gap by investigating the relationship between advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, and sponsored content and their impact on brand love, loyalty, and word-of-mouth.

The study applies the Tri-component attitude model to frame the relationship between promotion mix components (cognitive stage), brand love (affective stage), and resulting behaviors such as brand loyalty and word-of-mouth (conative stage). The focus on Generation Z is justified by their trendsetting behavior and significant purchasing power in the online fashion market.

The introduction concludes by outlining the research objectives, which include expanding the literature on the origins of brand love, applying innovative analytical techniques (IGSCA), and offering practical insights for online fashion retailers in Thailand.

Findings from the paper

- Promotion Mix Impact on Brand Love:** The study investigates how different elements of the promotion mix—advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations, and sponsored content—affect the emotional attachment consumers develop towards a brand (brand love). Advertising emerged as the most influential factor in fostering brand love. This can be attributed to the widespread visibility and reach of advertisements across various platforms, which enables brands to communicate their values, aesthetics, and product offerings consistently. Effective advertising not only informs but also evokes emotional connections through storytelling, appealing visuals, and memorable campaigns. As Generation Z consumers are highly active on digital platforms, their frequent exposure to creative and engaging ads significantly enhances their attachment to online fashion brands. Sales promotion also played a notable role in influencing brand love. Limited-time discounts, coupons, and special deals create a sense of urgency and excitement, leading to positive consumer experiences. These promotions often make consumers feel that they are receiving added value, reinforcing their positive perception of the brand. However, the impact is weaker compared to advertising, suggesting that while promotions generate short-term engagement, their effect on deep emotional connections is more limited. Personal selling had a smaller but

still significant influence on brand love. This reflects the importance of direct interaction between sales representatives and consumers, even in online settings. Personalized communication, live chats, and interactive sales sessions can enhance consumers' understanding of products and create trust, contributing to stronger emotional bonds. However, as personal selling in online fashion retail often occurs through indirect means like live streaming or social media interactions, its impact is less pronounced than traditional face-to-face encounters. Public relations did not significantly influence brand love in this study. This could be because PR activities are generally more focused on managing reputation, handling crises, and disseminating general information, rather than directly enhancing emotional attachment to the brand. While PR efforts may create a positive brand image, they may lack the personalized engagement required to foster brand love. Sponsored content also did not yield significant results. Although influencer marketing and collaborations are popular in fashion, the findings suggest that consumers might connect more with the influencer than the brand itself. This highlights the challenge brands face in ensuring that sponsored content directly translates into brand love rather than just influencer admiration.

2. **Brand Love's Influence on Brand Loyalty and Word-of-Mouth:** The study underscores the importance of brand love in driving loyalty and advocacy behaviors. Consumers who develop strong emotional attachments to a brand are more likely to remain loyal, repeatedly purchasing products despite competing offers. Brand love reinforces long-term commitment and reduces the likelihood of switching to other brands. This aligns with existing research showing that emotional connections often outweigh functional benefits in retaining customers. Brand love significantly influences word-of-mouth behavior. Consumers who feel passionate about a brand are more inclined to recommend it to others, enhancing the brand's reputation and broadening its customer base organically. Positive word-of-mouth is more credible than traditional advertising and can significantly influence purchasing decisions within social circles.
3. **Gender Differences in Promotion Strategies:** The study highlights how gender influences the effectiveness of promotion mix elements. For males, advertising and personal selling were the primary drivers of brand love among male consumers. This suggests that men are more receptive to informational and visual stimuli through ads, as well as direct engagement from sales representatives. Males may prefer straightforward, information-driven marketing that highlights product features and brand values. For females, sales promotion was the only significant predictor of brand love among female respondents. This reflects women's higher sensitivity to discounts, offers, and limited-time deals in fashion retail. Women may already possess greater product knowledge and engage in more extensive research, making them more responsive to promotions rather than general advertising or personal selling.

4. **Necessary Condition Analysis (NCA):** NCA complements the structural equation modeling (SEM) by identifying essential conditions for brand love, loyalty, and word-of-mouth. The results show that advertising and personal selling are crucial for fostering brand love. Without these elements, achieving strong emotional attachment and subsequent loyalty or advocacy is unlikely. This implies that even if sales promotions are effective in enhancing brand love, they cannot replace the foundational role of advertising and personal selling. Interestingly, while sales promotion positively influenced brand love, it was not identified as a necessary condition. This suggests that although promotions can enhance brand love, they are not critical to its development. In practical terms, a brand could foster emotional attachment through advertising and personal selling without relying heavily on sales promotions.

Implications from the paper

The findings of this study provide valuable insights for online fashion retailers and marketers aiming to strengthen brand love, foster loyalty, and drive word-of-mouth recommendations. By tailoring promotional strategies to align with consumer preferences, businesses can develop more effective marketing campaigns that resonate with different demographics.

1. Advertising as the Primary Driver of Brand Love:

Enhanced Brand Visibility: Advertising significantly influences brand love, making it crucial for fashion retailers to develop high-quality, emotionally resonant ads. Online platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Facebook provide ideal spaces to showcase engaging content. Ads that emphasize fashion trends, lifestyle integration, and aspirational narratives can create deeper emotional connections with consumers.

Storytelling and Emotional Appeal: Story-driven ads that incorporate personal stories, aspirational content, or behind-the-scenes looks into campaigns can build brand love. This approach not only informs but also evokes emotions that lead to stronger attachments. For example, advertisements highlighting the sustainability or ethical sourcing of products can resonate with value-driven Generation Z consumers.

Content Personalization: Utilize AI and data analytics to personalize ads based on consumer behavior. Personalized advertisements reflecting past purchases, browsing history, or social media activity can increase engagement and emotional attachment to the brand.

Visual and Interactive Ads: Incorporating interactive ads, AR (Augmented Reality) try-ons, and virtual showrooms allows consumers to engage directly with products, fostering stronger emotional

connections. Fashion retailers could create interactive Instagram stories, Snapchat filters, or TikTok challenges to capture attention.

2. Design Targeted and Experiential Sales Promotions:

Female-Centric Sales Promotion: For female consumers, sales promotions emerged as the most influential driver of brand love. Retailers should design flash sales, seasonal discounts, and exclusive member-only promotions that appeal to this demographic. Creating loyalty programs with reward points can encourage repeat purchases and strengthen brand attachment.

Gamified Promotions: Introducing gamification elements to sales promotions, such as interactive giveaways, scratch-off discounts, and spinning wheels on e-commerce platforms, can make the experience fun and memorable, driving emotional engagement.

Limited-Edition and Exclusive Releases: Offer limited-edition collections or influencer collaborations as part of sales promotions. This creates a sense of exclusivity and urgency, appealing to consumers' desire for uniqueness.

Buy-One-Get-One (BOGO) and Gift Promotions: For fashion brands targeting female consumers, BOGO deals, free gifts, or personalized shopping bundles can significantly enhance brand love. Pair promotions with special occasions (e.g., International Women's Day, Valentine's Day).

3. Train and Empower Sales Teams for Online Engagement:

Live Selling and Social Commerce: Personal selling can be digitally transformed through live streaming, interactive Q&A sessions, and virtual styling consultations. Sales representatives can conduct product demonstrations via Instagram Live, TikTok Shop, or Facebook Marketplace, engaging directly with potential buyers.

Building Relationships Online: Train sales teams to interact through messaging platforms (e.g., WhatsApp, Line, or direct messaging on social media). Prompt, friendly, and knowledgeable responses enhance consumer trust and foster brand love.

Influencer-Led Personal Selling: Leverage micro-influencers or brand ambassadors to act as virtual salespeople. Influencers can offer product recommendations or styling tips during live events, driving emotional engagement with the brand.

Customization and Recommendations: Encourage sales representatives to provide personalized product recommendations. By analyzing purchase history and style preferences, sales teams can create curated fashion experiences for individual consumers.

4. Gender-Specific Promotion Mix Strategies:

Male-Oriented Strategies (Advertising and Personal Selling): For male consumers, advertising and personal selling have the strongest influence on brand love. This demographic may be less influenced by promotions but responds positively to direct, factual, and visually engaging advertisements. Specifically, simple and clean ads with direct messaging should appeal more to male audiences. If possible, use celebrity endorsements or athlete partnerships in ads targeting men's fashion. In addition, leverage video reviews and tech-driven fashion content (such as 360 degree views and VR showcases). In addition, personal sales should emphasize the functionality, quality, and benefits of the product.

Female-Oriented Strategies (Sales Promotion): Women are more responsive to promotions than to advertisements. Hence, it should consider designing exclusive online sales events for female audiences as well as collaborate with female influencers to promote discounts and special deals. Also, use Instagram and Pinterest for visually appealing promotional campaigns tailored to women.

5. Develop Ongoing Engagement Programs:

Loyalty Programs and Exclusive Memberships: Create loyalty programs that reward consistent purchases, referrals, and engagement with the brand. Offer tiered memberships that provide increasing benefits as consumers continue shopping such as VIP tiers offering early access to collections, personal shopping services, and birthday gifts.

Brand Community Engagement: Develop online communities through social media groups, private membership platforms, or branded events. A sense of belonging fosters deeper brand attachment. Encourage customers to share user-generated content by creating fashion challenges or contests.

6. Word-of-Mouth Strategies:

Referral Programs: Incentivize loyal customers to refer friends and family through referral programs. Offer discounts or gifts for successful referrals, increasing brand visibility and consumer base through trusted word-of-mouth.

User-Generated Content (UGC): Encourage consumers to create and share content showcasing their purchases. Feature customer stories, reviews, and styling tips across brand platforms to enhance trust and relatability.

Ambassador Programs: Select loyal, highly engaged customers as brand ambassadors who promote products and share authentic testimonials. This drives brand love across their networks.

7. Rethinking Public Relations and Sponsored Content:

Emotional Storytelling in PR: PR campaigns should incorporate more emotional narratives about the brand’s mission, sustainability efforts, or community involvement. This can create emotional resonance even if PR’s direct influence on brand love was not significant in this study.

Interactive Sponsored Content: Rather than passive sponsored posts, create interactive content that integrates the brand more directly. Sponsored videos, live Q&As, and interactive experiences allow for stronger brand-consumer relationships.

Note

Kindly consider reading the complete paper published in the ABAC Journal at the following link: [Influences of the Promotion Mix on Brand Love, Brand Loyalty, and Word-Of-Mouth: Evidence from Online Fashion Retail in Thailand](#).

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