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The comparative study of factors affecting consumers' decisions to select independent and chain restaurants in bangkok

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore, by means of a survey research, the marketing factors and service performance (SERVPERF) affecting consumers' decisions to choose independent versus chain restaurants in Bangkok. The questionnaire survey was carried out with a sample of 400 consumers who experienced independent restaurants and another 400 who experienced chain restaurants from five areas in Bangkok (Yannawa, Vadhana, Bang Khen, Huai Khwang and Saphan Sung). The data was analyzed by PASW statistics. The descriptive analysis revealed that the majority of the participants for both independent and chain restaurants were female, young workers in their 30s with a Bachelor's degree and above. Majority of the participants were company employees, with a monthly income over 20,000 baht. However, the results showed a significant difference between the consumption behavior of the two groups of respondents. The consumers of independent restaurants frequented the restaurant more than once a week, with the intention of leisure dining, partying and familiarity with the restaurant owner. Many of them heard about the restaurant by word of mouth. Unlike the first group, the consumers of chain restaurants preferred to visit less than once a month with the purposed of business meetings. Most consumers knew about the restaurant from television and other media. Furthermore, by performing Factor Analysis and Logistic Regression Analysis, we were able to investigate the marketing factors and service performance leading to why each group chose that restaurant. The major factor for consumers' first priority to choose independent restaurants was product and pricing. The physical evidence and process were in descending order. Meanwhile, consumers of chain restaurants focused on product, and followed by place and promotion. Regarding service performance, majority of the participants of independent restaurants required reliability and responsiveness as highest priority, but consumers of chain restaurants focused on tangibles. Results from this analysis were used to recommend the applicable marketing strategy for independent versus chain restaurants which were probably needed to enhance their service performance.

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INTRODUCTION

Restaurant Industry is a very important industry in this country. There is high competition in the restaurant industry due to the rise of new entrepreneurs who are able to present the difference between products and service (Steven *et al.*, 1995). Mazzone and Associates (2013) stated that restaurants provide dining services to patrons who order and are served while seated. Restaurant businesses can be divided into 2 types; independent restaurants and chain restaurants. Powers and Barrows (2005) stated that independent restaurants are restaurants owned and operated by a particular person. This restaurant may be a small or medium sized restaurant operated by a single person or family. The advantage was they were easily to operate in order to meet with consumers' requirement immediately. On the other hand, Eric (2013) explained that chain restaurants have the same name, products and policies in every branch. Each branch can be found in the local area, province and national level which are owned by a parent company. The advantage was the owner can control all branches of restaurant including settle all policy and category in each branch bringing to maintain all profit in each branch. Kasikorn Research Center (2013) showed the market share of restaurants industry in Thailand. Independent restaurants have 488.37 billion baht of market share (83%), while chain restaurants have 97.47 billion baht of market share (17%). As there is a rise in competition in the restaurant industry, the old entrepreneurs and new entrepreneurs have to adjust their strategy to capture the market share. However, they must meet with the consumers' requirements in order to keep consumer retention and loyalty. The chain restaurants should focus on retaining existing consumers and being loyal to their consumers (Sommanaphan and Khongsawatkiat, 2013).

National Restaurant Association (2014) stated that the major factors affecting consumer decisions were the good service followed by favorite menu items, good value, convenient location and family or child friendly, respectively. Restaurants concerned about the quality of food and service are defined as meeting or exceeding the expectations of the consumer as promised by the restaurant. The food should be properly and neatly prepared and the service should be prompt and courteous. The benefit of good food and quality service was not only retaining existing consumers but also bringing new consumers through the word-of-mouth of its consumers. Assessing the marketing mix factors and SERVPERF attributes is a key component for an organizational philosophy and it must be a part of the quality improvement initiative in a restaurant (Rita *et al.*, 2011).

Logistic regression is a statistical method for analyzing a dataset in which there are one or more independent variables that determine an outcome. The goal of logistic regression is to find the best fitting model to describe the relationship between the dichotomous characteristic of interest (dependent variable = intention to use service restaurants) and a set of independent variables (marketing mix factors and service performance factors). Logistic regression generates the coefficients to predict a logit transformation of the probability of presence of the characteristic of interest (Pampel, 2000).

This research aims to investigate consumption behaviors, marketing factors and service performance (SERVPERF) affecting the consumers' decisions to choose the service from independent

versus chain restaurants. The results from this study are a guideline for developing the marketing strategy for independent versus chain restaurants to comply with consumers' requirements and to compete in the food service business with efficiency. Moreover, it will provide more benefits for general entrepreneurs and people who are interested in this business for practical purposes.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study was an exploratory research, conducted by using a survey method with questionnaires. The research was conducted into 2 phases. Firstly, a focus group interview with 50 consumers was done. Their ages were between 18 to 60 years old and most of them were students and company employees who experienced the service of independent restaurants and chain restaurants to obtain basic information for developing the questionnaire. Secondly, a face-to-face interview by using a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire was divided into five main parts. Part 1 was demographic data. Part 2 was consumption behavior for both independent and chain restaurants. Part 3 was marketing mix factors and part 4 was service performance (SERVPERF) (Cronin and Taylor, 1992). The final part was consumer intention to select the restaurant and recommendation. The 7-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree") was used for collecting the data in part 3 to 5.

Sample and data collection

In this study, there were two groups of targeted samples who had experiences in dining out Thai foods at the independent restaurants and chain restaurants. Two stages of the field survey were organized. The first stage was the pre-test in which 30 respondents in each restaurant were sampling to answer the questionnaire, in order to assure the validity and reliability using Cronbach's alpha assessment. After the revision of the questionnaire, the second stage was survey method by using multistage sampling which implemented with larger groups of respondents. Firstly, five areas in Bangkok were simple random sampling (Yannawa, Vadhana, Bang Khen, Huai Khwang and Saphan Sung), after that two types of restaurants were stratified. Questionnaire survey was conducted with the respondents who were sampling purposively. The first group of respondents included 400 consumers who had experiences in dining out at the independent restaurants. The second group consisted of 400 consumers who had experiences in dining out at the chain restaurants. Some of them had experienced both types of restaurants. The data was collected by purposive sampling using the screen question.

After gathering all questionnaires, the data was analyzed by PASW (Predictive Analytics Software) version 18 for windows. Statistics were employed in order to gain the results required for the scale measurement. Descriptive analysis such as frequencies, means and standard deviations were calculated. Reliability of the scale was tested. Factor Analysis was performed in order to decrease the number of variables from the questionnaire including the marketing factors and SERVPERF for the independent and chain restaurants, and to calculate the factor score for further analysis. The acquired factors were carried out to become the independent variables for "Logistic Regression Analysis". "Logistic Regression Analysis" was used to examine the relationship between independent variables (marketing factors and SERVPERF) and dependent variables (intention to use

service of the independent and chain restaurants). The analysis could identify the dominant factors influencing consumers' purchase intentions, which determined the marketing strategy of both types of restaurants.

Validity and reliability of questionnaire

The quality of the research instrument or questionnaire was examined by assessing the face validity and the reliability (Hair *et al.*, 2006). The reliability was assessed by using Cronbach's alpha to verify the internal consistency of the questionnaire (Wallen and Fraenkel 2011). The Cronbach's alpha for questionnaires of independent restaurants was between 0.704-0.975. While, the Cronbach's alpha for questionnaires of chain restaurants was between 0.738-0.933. All Cronbach's alpha was above 0.7, therefore, results provided strong evidence for the reliability of the measures used in this study (Malhotra and Peterson, 2006).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics

The respondents' profiles of two consumer groups, who had experiences in dining out at the independent and chain restaurants, were presented in Table 1. The majority of respondents were female, 63% for independent restaurants and 67% for chain restaurants. Most of the majority of the participants involved in this study possessed a Bachelor's degree and/or above. Approximately 90% for both independent and chain restaurants. About half of the majority of the participants obtained a monthly income of more than 20,000 baht for both independent and chain restaurants. Regarding occupation, it was found that the majorities of respondents were working as company employees (44%), followed by students 29% for independent restaurants and 26% for chain restaurants. Finally, the majority of the participants for both independent and chain restaurants were female, young workers in their 30s with a Bachelor's degree and above. Which worked as company employees, with their monthly income over 20,000 baht.

From the analysis of demographic data, the results were complied with Sommanaphan and Khongsawatkiat's study in 2013. The majority of participants were female, aged between 31-35 years, single, Bachelor's degree, company employee with a personal monthly income of around 20,001 – 30,000 Baht. This demographics assured the characteristics of consumers who were dining out at the independent and chain restaurants.

Table 2 shows the results of the consumption behavior of respondents. Regarding independent restaurants, it was found that the frequency of use at independent restaurants was more than once a week, followed by once a week and 2-3 times a month. Leisure dining was the most favorable purpose, followed by partying and familiarity with the owner. Consumers mostly joined with friends, family and relatives when eating out at independent restaurants. The source of information on independent restaurants was by word of mouth from friends or passes by. The average time per meal in using service at independent restaurants was more than 1 hour and 30-60 minutes. However, the consumers' behaviors who were dining out at chain restaurants was different in frequency from the independent restaurants which was less than once a month, followed by once a month and 2-3 times a month. Leisure dining was the most dominant purpose, to join a party and business meetings were second. Consumers usually joined with family/relatives and friends, respectively. The source of information on chain restaurants came from word of mouth from a friend, television or radio and internet, respectively. The average time per meal in using the service at chain restaurants was 30-60 minutes or more than 1 hour.

The above behavior was complied with the consumers' behavior on dining of Japanese foods in Muang District, Chiang Mai. The study on the consumers' behavior showed that the average frequency of using Japanese restaurants was once a month. The period of time for eating out is uncertain. Friend influenced decisions to eat out or to select Japanese restaurants. There were 2-3 persons or family joining in eating out. The communication channel that makes consumers know the said restaurant are the group reference such as a friend or an acquaintance by word of mouth for meeting purposes at Japanese restaurants (Asavamongkolphan, 2006).

Table 1. Demographic information of respondents

Demographic Variables		Independent restaurants		Chain restaurants	
		n = 400	Percentage	n = 400	Percentage
Gender	Male	148	37%	132	33%
	Female	252	63%	268	67%
Age of respondents (Mean)		32 ± 11.61		33 ± 11.46	
Education	High school	38	10%	42	10%
	Bachelor's degree	268	67%	259	65%
	Master's degree	89	22%	96	24%
	Above Master's degree	5	1%	3	1%
Personal monthly income	Less than 10,000 baht	90	22%	85	21%
	10,000-20,000 baht	111	28%	117	29%
	20,001-30,000 baht	62	16%	64	16%
	More than 30,000 baht	137	34%	134	34%
Occupation	Student	115	29%	106	26%
	Businessman	34	8%	42	11%
	Company employee	174	44%	175	44%
	Government official	19	5%	21	5%
	Others	58	14%	56	14%

Table 2. Consumption behavior of respondents

Variables		Independent restaurants		Chain restaurants	
		n = 400	Percentage	n = 400	Percentage
Frequency of use	More than once a week	111	28%	49	12%
	Once a week	89	22%	57	14%
	2-3 times a month	77	19%	92	23%
	Once a month	73	18%	92	23%
	Less than once a month	50	13%	110	28%
Purpose to visit	Leisure dining	209	52%	315	79%
	Party	98	25%	45	11%
	Meeting	5	1%	19	4%
	Privacy	21	5%	15	4%
	Familiarity with the owner	60	15%	2	1%
	Others	7	2%	4	1%
Accompany person	Alone	26	7%	25	6%
	Family or Relatives	165	41%	204	51%
	Friends	197	49%	158	40%
	Others	12	3%	13	3%
Source of information on restaurant	Friend	195	49%	115	29%
	Television or Radio	12	3%	96	24%
	Family or Relatives	67	17%	31	8%
	Pass by	91	23%	63	16%
	Internet	25	6%	82	20%
	Others (Newspaper and Brochures)	10	2%	13	3%
Average time per meal	Less than 15 minutes	9	2%	13	3%
	15-30 minutes	57	14%	49	12%
	30-60 minutes	153	38%	225	56%
	More than 1 hours	181	46%	113	29%

Factor Analysis

This section explains the results of performing Factor analysis for marketing factors and service performance (SERVPERF) of independent versus chain restaurants. The details of the analysis are as follows.

Marketing factors

In this part, marketing mix factors including twenty seven items which were grouped by using Factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measured of sampling adequacy is 0.936 for independent restaurants and 0.925 for chain restaurants, exceeding the recommended value of 0.80 (Kaiser, 1974; Stewart, 1981). Therefore, these variables were deemed appropriate for Factor analysis. From table 3, six interpretable factors were obtained from the analysis.

Factor 1 was “Product and Price” that integrated good food taste, food freshness, food cleanliness, stability of food taste, food portion sizes suitable for consumption, menu variety, price appropriation compared with food quality and reasonability of charges compared with chain restaurants.

Factor 2 was “Process” that indicated system attributes including queue system, accuracy of order, waiting time for service and quick problem solutions.

Factor 3 was “Promotion” that related to advertising, sales promotions and discount rates for member cards.

Factor 4 was “Physical Evidence” which contained beautiful decoration, cleanliness of the restaurant and table sufficient for number of consumers.

Factor 5 was “People” which consisted of enthusiasm and intention of service, punctuality of service, sufficient staff for service and suitable staff attire.

Factor 6 was “Place” which consisted of convenience of restaurant location, easy to find and opened and closed times that are reasonable.

With regards to chain restaurants, many factors analyzed by Factor analysis are similar to the independent restaurants. The numbers of factors were 6 factors of which factor 1 was different from the one of independent restaurants. The said factor 1 was “Product”, while pricing was separated into another factor. Process and people were combined together.

Service performance factors

In part of service performance for independent versus chain restaurants. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measured of sampling adequacy is 0.939 for independent restaurants and 0.926 for chain restaurants, exceeding the recommended value of 0.80 (Kaiser, 1974; Stewart, 1981). Therefore, these variables were deemed appropriate for Factor analysis. From table 3, four interpretable factors were obtained from the analysis.

Table 3. The result of Factor Analysis for marketing factors and service performance

Factors	Independent restaurants	Chain restaurants
Marketing factors (7Ps)	Product and Price	Product
	Process	Process and People
	Promotion	Promotion
	Physical evidence	Physical evidence
	People	Price
Service performance (SERVPERF)	Place	Place
	Reliability and Responsiveness	Reliability and Responsiveness
	Tangibles	Tangibles
	Assurance	Assurance
	Empathy	Empathy

Factor 1 was “Reliability and Responsiveness” that integrated employees should do as promised, interest in solving consumer problems, insistence on error free records, provide service on time as promised, perform service right the first time, prompt service to consumers, employees give personal assistance, never too busy to respond to request and employees who are trustworthy.

Factor 2 was “Tangibles” which consisted of up-to-date equipment, appealing physical facilities, neat appearing employees and visually appealing service materials.

Factor 3 was “Assurance” which highlighted on consumers feeling safe in transactions, consistently courteous with consumers, knowledgeable and should inform when services will be performed.

Factor 4 was “Empathy” which contained convenient operating hours, having consumers’ best interests at heart, individual attention to consumers and understanding consumers’ specific needs.

For chain restaurants, the grouping of factor for SERVPERF is also similar to independent restaurants. There were 4 factors and the component of each factor was exactly the same as the case of independent restaurants.

Logistic Regression Analysis

Logistic Regression Analysis was used to test the relationship between independent variables (marketing factors and SERVPERF) and dependent variables (intention to use service of the independent and chain restaurants). The details of an analysis were as follows.

Marketing factors models:

A goodness-of-fit test that is commonly used to assess the fit of Logistic Regression models is the Hosmer–Lemeshow test (Hosmer and Lemeshow, 1980). According to marketing factors for independent restaurants, it was found that the Hosmer and Lemeshow test had p-value equal to 0.332 > 0.05, then accepted H₀ showing that the model is appropriate. Meanwhile, for chain restaurants, the test had p-value equal to 0.107 > 0.05 showing that the model is also appropriate.

Logistic Regression was performed on our six independent variables, product and price, process, promotion, physical evidence, people and place, to ascertain whether they significantly associated with consumers’ intentions to use the service of independent restaurants. From table 4, it was found that the major factor to choose independent restaurants was product and pricing. Due to the odd ratio of products and prices equal to 2.714 which is the highest among others. It is shown that product and price is the most dominant factor affecting consumers’ intentions to use the service of independent restaurants. The physical evidence and process were in descending order. As a result, the effective marketing strategy must be focused on foods including consistency of taste, freshness, hygiene and the variety of foods. Perceived value pricing would be set and the price should

Table 4. Result of Logistic Regression Analysis for marketing factors model

Independent restaurants							
Marketing factors	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Odd ratio	95.0% C.I. for Odd ratio	
						Lower	Upper
Product and price	0.998	0.137	52.827	0.000*	2.714	2.073	3.552
Process	0.493	0.121	16.588	0.000*	1.638	1.292	2.076
Promotion	-0.214	0.120	3.179	0.075	0.808	0.639	1.021
Physical evidence	0.603	0.126	22.950	0.000*	1.828	1.428	2.340
People	0.096	0.116	0.679	0.410	1.101	0.876	1.383
Place	0.144	0.115	1.563	0.211	1.155	0.922	1.446
Constant	-0.408	0.118	11.846	0.001*	0.665		
Chain restaurants							
Marketing factors	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Odd ratio	95.0% C.I. for Odd ratio	
						Lower	Upper
Product	0.539	0.116	21.643	0.000*	1.715	1.366	2.152
Process and people	0.218	0.107	4.152	0.042*	1.243	1.008	1.533
Physical evidence	0.071	0.106	0.450	0.502	1.074	0.872	1.323
Place	0.380	0.112	11.617	0.001*	1.463	1.175	1.821
Promotion	0.250	0.108	5.345	0.021*	1.283	1.039	1.586
Price	0.204	0.107	3.643	0.056	1.226	0.995	1.512
Constant	-0.253	0.108	5.520	0.019*	0.777		

Noted: B = Beta value; S.E. = Standard error; C.I. = Confidence interval

*Statistically significant at p-value < 0.05

be clearly shown on the menu. For the physical evidence and process strategy, independent restaurants should be decorated and created with a comfortable atmosphere such as fountains or garden surroundings. The staff of the independent restaurants needed to be well-trained to work with enthusiasm and provide a quick response to the consumers.

For chain restaurants, Logistic Regression was performed on our six independent variables, product, process and people, physical evidence, place, promotion and price, found that consumers intentions to use the service of chain restaurants was most related to product because the odd ratio of product equal to 1.715 which is the among others. It showed that product is the most dominant factor to consumers' intentions to use the service of chain restaurants and followed by place, promotion and process and people, respectively. Therefore, the chain restaurants should develop a different marketing strategy particularly on place and promotion. The branches needed to be extending to offer more convenience to the consumers, and provide sufficient parking spaces. The promotional strategy such as food discount, special menu of the month and membership cards were recommended.

SERVPERF models:

In this part, the Hosmer and Lemeshow test was used to assure the fit of the SERVPERF models. For independent restaurants, the result showed that, the Hosmer and Lemeshow test had p-value equal to 0.808 > 0.05, then accepted H₀ showing that the model is appropriate. Meanwhile, for chain restaurants, the test had p-value equal to 0.275 > 0.05 showing that the model is also appropriate.

choose independent restaurants was reliability and responsiveness. Due to the odd ratio of reliability and responsiveness equal to 2.129 which is the highest among others. It showed that reliability and responsiveness were the most dominant factors affecting consumers' intentions to use the service of independent restaurants, followed by tangibles, assurance and empathy, respectively. As a result, the effective service strategy must be focused on performing the service accurately, consistently and respond appropriately to the customer's request. Basically, the independent restaurant was operated by a person or family business. They were more attentive and flexible in dealing with consumers' requests, inquiries and problems.

Meanwhile, chain restaurants focused on tangibles due to the odd ratio of tangibles equal to 2.047 which is the highest among others. It is shown that tangibles were the most dominant factor to consumers' intentions to use the service of chain restaurants, followed by reliability and responsiveness and assurance, respectively. Therefore, the chain restaurants should develop a different service strategy should be modern equipment, beautiful decoration, well-dressed staff and attractive advertising menus and facilities. Tangibility also included the standardized operational system in all branches. The results compiled with the study of Huang (2011) on determinants of service quality for tourists' satisfaction and loyalty for wine tourism. The result showed that tangibles, reliability and responsiveness are the major service attributes influencing the tourists' satisfaction. These service attributes either reflect the motivation or influence the experience of the winery tourists.

Table 5. Result of Logistic Regression Analysis for SERVPERF model

Independent restaurants							
SERVPERF factors	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Odd ratio	95.0% C.I. for Odd ratio	
						Lower	Upper
Reliability and responsiveness	0.756	0.124	37.081	0.000*	2.129	1.670	2.716
Tangibles	0.564	0.116	23.562	0.000*	1.757	1.399	2.206
Assurance	0.422	0.115	13.549	0.000*	1.525	1.218	1.909
Empathy	0.298	0.113	6.995	0.008*	1.347	1.080	1.680
Constant	-0.357	0.114	9.851	0.002*	0.700		
Chain restaurants							
SERVPERF factors	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Odd ratio	95.0% C.I. for Odd ratio	
						Lower	Upper
Reliability and responsiveness	0.654	0.120	29.420	0.000*	1.922	1.518	2.434
Tangibles	0.716	0.126	32.166	0.000*	2.047	1.598	2.621
Empathy	-0.168	0.111	2.277	0.131	0.846	0.680	1.051
Assurance	0.571	0.116	23.991	0.000*	1.769	1.408	2.223
Constant	-0.284	0.114	6.184	0.013*	0.753		

Noted: B = Beta value; S.E. = Standard error; C.I. = Confidence interval

*Statistically significant at p-value < 0.05

From table 5, it was found that Logistic Regression was performed on our four independent variables; reliability and responsiveness, tangibles, assurance and empathy, to ascertain whether they significantly associated with consumers' intentions to use the service of independent restaurants. It was found that the major factor to

CONCLUSION

This study is an exploratory research using survey methods to examine the consumption behavior, marketing mix factors and service performance (SERVPERF) affecting the consumers' intentions to choose the service from independent versus chain restaurants.

According to the independent restaurants, product and price, physical evidence and process were the major factors that affected consumers' purchase intentions. While, the majority of participants of chain restaurants mostly focused on four factors; product, place, promotion and process, respectively.

The performance based approach (SERVPERF) of service quality was perceived by the consumers, and further be empirically tested the relationship of SERVPERF with consumers' purchase intentions to independent and chain restaurants. The findings showed that in the case of independent restaurants, reliability and responsiveness contributed the highest impact to consumers' purchase intentions. On the other hand, consumers' purchase intentions for chain restaurants were most associated with tangibility attributes of service quality. Overall, the service improvement program should be regularly conducted in order to improve employee performance through increased employee motivation, improved service skills, training courses and awareness of company policies. Managing service quality levels was a critical strategy for both independent and chain restaurants to retain their current customers and also enable them to attract more potential customers in the future.

There were some limitations in this research. The respondents were sampled from Bangkok, and thus the conclusions derived from this study may be limited regarding the population variable. Future study should expand the scope to conduct at a nationwide level to becoming more generalized. In addition, this research was conducted with the consumers of independent and chain restaurants. The methodology could be implemented to the data for other types of restaurants such as ethnic restaurants, fast food restaurants and gourmet restaurants.

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