

# THE EFFECTS OF ADVERTISING AND SALES PROMOTION ON BRAND AWARENESS FOR A FOOD PRODUCT BRAND IN WHOLESALE SHOPS, BANGKOK AND METROPOLITAN AREAS

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## Abstract

Marketing communication tools may provide the means for developing strong customer based brand equity. Among marketing communication tools, advertising and sales promotions have always played a pivotal role. Prior research suggested that consumer search behavior is likely to be different across product categories. Hence, this paper examined the effect of perceived advertising spend and price promotions on brand equity across experience goods and services. The objectives of the study are to verify the relationship between the IMC (Advertising and Sales Promotion) and brand awareness, and to investigate how the IMC (Advertising and Sales Promotion) influences brand awareness regarding food products in wholesale shops, using questionnaires containing closed questions, and a sample of 500 regular customers of the wholesale shops. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire was preliminarily tested using a sample of 50 customers. Research was based on a five point Likert-type scale with an empirical study analysis using a Confirmatory Factor Analysis. The findings revealed that brand awareness was affected by two key factors, with the greatest affect being from advertising and sales promotion. The research model was considered an acceptable fit with the Goodness-of-Fit indices  $\chi^2/df = 2.553$ , GFI = 0.939, RFI = 0.935, IFI = 0.970, TLI = 0.960, CFI = 0.969 and RMSA = 0.056.

Keywords: Brand Awareness, Advertising and Sale Promotion

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The food industry in Thailand has grown rapidly over the years owing to an increasing demand in the consumer market, both domestically and internationally. In order to meet an escalating trade in processed food products, the Thai Government has set to transform Thailand into Asia's largest food trade and distribution center. Today, Thailand is one of the world's top ten producers and exporters of processed food products, with the Thai food industry contributing about 23% to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2015. In 2016, Thailand rose up by two ranks from the previous year, to become the world's 13<sup>th</sup> leading food exporter. Given these positive signs, supportive government policies and the recovering global economy, Thailand's food industry is more than ready to experience an impressive growth rate in 2017, inviting new players to join its growing food industry. In the meantime, Thailand's GDP also expanded 3.3 percent from a year earlier in the March quarter of 2017, following a 3.0 percent growth in the fourth quarter of 2016 and slightly above the market expectations of a 3.2 percent expansion. For 2017, Thailand's economic planning agency (NESDB) expected Southeast Asia's second-biggest economy to grow between 3.3 and 3.8 percent, a narrower range to the 3.0 to 4.0 percent range it forecast previously (Asian Development Bank Outlook 2017).

Following this growth in the food industry, there was an associated increase in retail and wholesale, which put emphasis on price factors, such as value for money. Many modernized retail sectors utilize the cost leader and private label products or house brand to motivate and influence their consumers. Brands also play an important role in the decision-making processes of business customers (Bendixen et al., 2004), acting as a tool for achieving organizational consensus among the many actors involved in the buying process (Webster and Keller, 2004). Often it is a manufacturer's reputation, combined with the buyer's own level of awareness, and degree of loyalty shown to the manufacturer, that are important considerations in purchase decisions (Cretu and Brodie, 2007; Mudambi, 2002). Branding in the food industry has been a major concern among food suppliers. During the past few years, there has been strong competition among business developers to increase their market share by increasing the value of their brand, Hosseinzadeh A. et al (2014).

Brand value is recognized as one of the top research priorities in the branding context (Allaway et al., 2011; Keller and Lehmann, 2006). The increasing interest in the value brands represent for firms, is evident in the merger and acquisition activity since the late 1980s and early 1990s, and in the large sums that have been paid for brands. A strong brand with positive equity is considered to have

high strategic value and major advantages: higher margins, brand-extension opportunities, insulation against competitors, and more effective communicative power, as well as stronger consumer preferences, purchase intentions and customer loyalty. It has thus become essential for brand managers to understand and measure brand equity (Mackay, 2001). For the processed meat market to grow gradually, each key player must maintain their market share with both existing and prospective new consumers. Importantly, brand awareness is the fundamental building block of brand loyalty, in order to retain customer loyalty, positive performance and maintain the brand's market share in the specific industry.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Brand Equity and Brand Awareness***

Aaker (2001) defined brand equity as a set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand. These include the name and symbols that add to, or subtract from the value provided by product or services to a firm and/or to that firm's customers. When the consumer based brand equity is taken into consideration, definitions are more consumer specific. The consumers consider the brand as an important part of every product, therefore determining the brand can increase the value of every product

(Kotler and Armstrong, 2013). The attempt to define the relationship between customers and brands, created the concept of "brand equity" in marketing literature (Wood, 2000). The concept of brand equity has attracted lots of attention after being introduced in the business world and has been the basis of many studies. Modern theories of marketing consider brand equity as a key asset for companies. Probably this level of brand equity desirability is key for its strategic role in making managerial and marketing decisions and consequently allowing a company to gain a competitive advantage. For Duncan (2002), marketing communication is the glue that enables the connection between the firm's efforts and customers' favorable responses. Brand equity is a key issue in marketing. On the other hand, the consumer perspective focuses the conceptualization and measurement of brand equity on individual consumers (Leone et al., 2006). Consumer-based brand equity measures assess the awareness, attitudes, associations, attachments and loyalties, consumers have toward a brand (Keller and Lehmann, 2006). Besides, Aaker (2001) provided the meaning of name awareness as one of the important factors to create the brand value from the brand-name logo. If a consumer has a high perceived level or knows the brand-name logo, it is easier for them to make their purchasing decision. A higher level of product brand

awareness, persuades a consumer to choose that brand's products as a priority. In summary, brand awareness is "the ability for a buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category". Therefore, brand awareness consists of both brand recognition and recall. Brand awareness is formed by brand recall and brand recognition, as suggested by Yoo & Donthu (2001).

Furthermore, MacDonald and Sharp (2000) concluded that brand awareness plays a key role for consumers facing a new decision. Repeated purchases must be regarded as new decisions in this respect, since the individual faces a problem or need and tries to solve it. Huang and Sarigollu (2012) also stated that brand awareness has a positive relationship with brand performance in the marketplace. It shows that brand awareness can influence consumers' reactions in the marketplace, leading to a better brand performance, and can influence decision-making and encourage the purchase intention. Brand awareness is also used as a choice tactic for consumers to make purchase decisions. Products with high brand awareness may make consumers associate the product with high product quality; thus, high brand awareness attracts more consumers to purchase products from that brand. Consequently, establishing brand awareness of products, especially new products, becomes essential for the company. To enhance brand

awareness and encourage customers to buy products, advertisers usually apply various strategies, such as placement marketing (Tsai, Liang, and Liu, 2007). Henderson et al. (2003) stated that under the influence of brand awareness, many brand choices are made with little processing of information. Thus, brand awareness in this regard is a cue to shape decision-making. Based on this, there is another work of Wang et al. (2012), who concluded that in the absence of product image, a cognitive image encourages purchase intentions. On the other hand, it shows how advertising awareness and brand awareness can encourage purchase intentions. Also, brand awareness arises from advertising awareness and is actually the same as advertising awareness (Romaniuk et al., 2004).

In fact, there are different dimensions of brand equity across industries, for example,

Norjaya et al. (2007) classified the brand equity dimensions of household electrical appliances as brand loyalty, brand distinctiveness and brand association or awareness. Wang et al. (2008) suggested that global brand equity consisted of quality perception, brand awareness, brand resonance, and corporation ability association. Xu and Andrew (2009) defined the conceptual framework of hotel brand equity as brand loyalty, brand association, brand awareness and quality of experience. Thus, researchers must monitor the dimensions of brand

equity within the specific industry (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010). Brand familiarity and brand trust (Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Aleman, 2005) were proposed as additional dimensions in the fast food industry as they were indicated as important dimensions in this context (Tan et al., 2011). Similarly, Das (2014) proved that, awareness, association, and perceived quality had a significant impact on brand loyalty and purchase intentions, in a food retailing study.

### ***Relationship between Advertising, Sale Promotion and Brand Equity***

Advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods and services and the associated purchase price (Kotler, 2003). Among components of the marketing integrated communication model, advertising is identified with a higher position than the other marketing components, as customers are informed of new products through advertising. In addition, advertising minimizes the barriers between customers and the organization (Blech, 2001; Lopez et al, 2002). Marketing mix elements influence consumers' equity perceptions toward brands (Pappu and Quester, 2008). These variables are important not only because they can greatly affect brand equity but also because they are under the company's control, enabling marketers to grow brand

equity through their marketing activities (Yoo et al., 2000; Ailawadi et al., 2003; Herrmann et al., 2007). Within the discipline of marketing dynamics, numerous studies use financial and product-market measures of brand equity to analyze the short-term and long-term effects of marketing actions and policies, such as advertising and price promotions (Leeflang et al., 2009). From the consumer-based brand equity perspective, which this research follows, Yoo et al. (2000) found that high advertising spend, high price, high distribution intensity and distribution through retailers with a good store image helps to build brand equity. Villarejo-Ramos and Sanchez-Franco (2005) reviewed the effect of marketing communication and sale promotion on brand equity. Results indicated that marketing communication has a positive effect on brand equity and provides strong protection from the criteria of perceived quality, brand loyalty, brand awareness and brand image which collectively form the preface of brand equity. Supporting this result, Buil et al. (2013) revealed that perceived advertising spend has a positive effect on brand awareness. Alnazer (2013) studied the interaction between promotion type and brand awareness level.

Advertising expenditure, as the main marketing communications tool in the consumer market, should be considered when determining the effects of marketing communications

on consumers, and the perceptions that the messages are provoking among different target individuals. Keller (2003) notes that the firm's marketing communications contribute to brand equity. That is, effective communication enables the formation of brand awareness and a positive brand image. Advertising is a powerful way of communicating a brand's functional and emotional values (de Chernatony, 2010). In general, the effectiveness of this communication tool depends on its content (i.e., the message), the execution or how the advertisement conveys the message, and the frequency with which a consumer sees the advertisement (Batra et al., 1996 and Kotler, 2000). As mentioned earlier, advertising creates brand awareness, strong links, favorable ideas, and unique associations to the brand in the consumers' memory, and stimulates positive brand judgments and feelings (Keller, 2007). However, to achieve these results, the advertising needs a suitable design and execution. In particular, one of the main concerns in devising an advertising strategy relates to the creative strategy (Kapferer, 2004 and Keller, 2007). Through an original and innovative advertising strategy, organizations may be more likely to capture consumers' attention. In sequence, consumers' attention can lead to higher brand awareness, and higher perceived quality, and therefore contributes to forming strong, favorable and unique

associations (Villarejo, 2002). In short, besides increasing consumers' familiarity with a brand, advertising can shape consumers' perceptions of quality and other brand associations (Moorthy and Hawkins, 2005). Large advertising investments can favor correct brand recall and recognition. Brand advertising spend can increase the scope and frequency of brand appearance, and as a consequence, the level of brand awareness (Chu and Keh, 2006; Keller, 2007).

Sales promotions, as a part of integrated marketing communication (IMC) are used by many companies for introducing new products, increasing sales, or influencing the consumer decision process (Montaner & Pina, 2008). There are many different sales promotions such as price discounts, feature advertising, special displays, trade deals, reward programs, coupons, rebates, contests, and sweepstakes (Neslin, 2002). According to Srinivasan et al. (2004), promotional sales, i.e. significant temporary price reductions, are an important tool in the marketing mix of food retailers worldwide. For many consumer packaged goods, most of the marketing budget is directed to promotional sales. The role of promotional sales is to attract customers to the store and to advertise certain products, for example breakfast cereals in Germany are on promotional sale every 10 to 20 weeks. Hosken and Reiffen (2004) and Berck et al. (2008) stated that promotional sales

make up to 50 per cent of annual product price variations. All these influences lead to the following 3 hypotheses which were used in the current research:

Hypothesis 1: Advertising has a significant positive effect on sales promotion.

Hypothesis 2: Sale promotions have a significant positive effect on brand awareness.

Hypothesis 3: Advertising has a significant positive effect on brand awareness.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This quantitative research aimed to survey target consumers in Bangkok and metropolitan regions, and was designed to be a descriptive research using primary data collected from a sampling survey with questionnaires carried out at wholesale shops in August 15-30, 2016. The sample size (n) of this study was 500 regular customers of wholesale shops. The survey was conducted by face-to-face interviews of customers, who gave their opinion of their brand awareness through integrated marketing communication (IMC). The specific food brand-name "x" refers to the top ranking, well-known food brand which supplies pork, chicken and eggs for modern trade, in supermarkets and wholesales all over Thailand. This study employed a survey design using questionnaires as the main

instrument. Data were collected by non-probability sampling from 25 shop locations with an accidental sampling method. The survey locations were selected only in Bangkok and metropolitan areas in 5 provinces (25 shops). A descriptive analysis (frequency, percentage and standard deviation) was applied to analyze the demographic factors. A Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using structural equations modelling with the AMOS program was used for testing the research hypotheses and model, with a 0.05 significance level. Path Analysis was used to analyze the correlations within defined factors for both direct and indirect effects, as well as to analyze their latent variables.

The questionnaire was checked for validity and reliability using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient and 50 sets of pre-testing to improve the questionnaire items. Each variable with a standard no lower than 0.70 was accepted as a coefficient presenting good reliability (Hair, 1998). The result of Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) analysis is presented in Table 1.

### **Data Collection and questionnaire structure**

The researcher gathered both primary and secondary data. The secondary data came from studying the concepts, theory and knowledge of integrated marketing communication and brand awareness from

textbooks, international journals and theses from the main library and search engines. The information collected was used to construct the questionnaire. Primary data was collected from 500 respondents, customers of wholesale shops in Bangkok and other metropolitan regions. The questionnaire consisted of 3 parts; 1) brand awareness, 2) integrated marketing communication, composed of advertising, sales promotion, event marketing, PR and personal marketing and 3) demographic factors composed of gender, age, education, occupation, and family income. Questions in part 1 and 2, adopted a Likert scale with five points where 1 = "strongly disagree", 2 = disagree, 3 neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = "strongly agree" for all items.

For the section on integrated marketing communication, the questions were adapted from Keller (2001) and Kotler (2002) under the 5 components of IMC: advertising (6 items), sales promotions (4 items), event marketing (5 items), PR (3 items) and personal selling (3 items). According to the path analysis of the Structural Equation Model (SEM), there were 2 factors most effective in affecting brand awareness, these were advertising (6 items) and price promotion (4 items). The questions on advertising consisted of; 1) I know "X" from television and radio, 2) I know "X" from print media such as magazines, leaflets and newspapers, 3) I know "X" from outdoor media such as billboards, BTS and street

and 4) I know "X" from online media such as website and face-book. For the sales promotion, the questions consisted of 1) I know "X" from price discount promotions, 2) I know "X" from "Buy 1 get 1 free", 3) I know "X" from a complementary premium promotion and 4) I know "X" from the discount sales promotion for a festive event (New Year, Song Kran festival).

Brand awareness was defined as "the ability for a buyer to recognize or recall that a brand was a member of a certain product category". Thus, brand awareness consists of both brand recognition and recall. The questions in the brand awareness part consisted of 6 items for relevant to specific brand recognition. Brand awareness was measured with reference to Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE). The brand "X" refers to one specific packaged food brand-name sold at the selected whole-sale shop. During interviews, the respondents were asked about their awareness, by showing the logo of the specific food brand-name to check if the respondent could recall that brand logo. The "X" packaged food brand-name product category consists of chicken, pork and egg.

Brand awareness informed by brand recall and brand recognition was measured by 6 items; "I remember easily the characteristics of brand X", "I remember easily the logo of brand X" (these two items allow confirmation that the respondent has brand associations in their memory), "I know what brand X

looks like”, “I can recognize brand X among other brands”; “I am very aware of brand X”; “brand X is very familiar to me” (Yoo, Donthu, & Lee, 2000). There were three additional questions which led the respondents to specific product categories, these questions stated 1) I can recall "brand X" for chicken products 2) I can recall "brand X" for pork products and 3) I can recall "brand X" for egg products.

## **RESULTS**

The total sample of 500 respondents (n = 500) was composed of 359 females (71.8%) and 141 males (28.2%). The education level of respondents varied with, 47.2% of respondents having qualifications lower than a bachelor’s degree, 42.8% percent holding bachelor’s degrees and 10% higher than bachelor’s degree. Many (26.6%) respondents worked in their own business, with an average monthly income of 18,001 to 24,000 baht.

The measurement scales were evaluated by applying a regression analysis to precede the estimation of the structural model (supplied by the AMOS Version 22). As shown in Table 1, regarding the measurement model, all constructs had a CR over the cut-off of 0.70 identified by Carmines, E. G., & McIver, J. P. (1981). Based on these assessments, measures used within this study were within acceptable levels, supporting the reliability of the constructs.

Construct validation includes content, convergent, and discriminate validities. Content validity was verified by expert judgment and by a careful literature review. Convergent validity was evaluated by examining the factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE). All estimated standard loadings were higher than 0.70, and the AVE for all exceeded the recommended level of 0.50, suggesting good convergent validity by Hair, J. F., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2011). As shown in Figure 1, the estimation model with standardized regression weights and a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted, to empirically test the measurement model. Multiple tests on construct validity and reliability were performed.

As the  $\alpha$ - values (Table 1) for all the constructs were greater than the guideline of 0.60, it can therefore be concluded that the scales can be applied for the analysis with acceptable reliability. CR and AVE were calculated from model estimates using the CR formula and AVE formula given by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Table 2, presents the standardized value of direct, indirect and total effect among the latent variables. The path analysis, indicates that the variables for advertising had both direct and indirect effects on brand awareness with a total value of 0.347.

Table 1: Results for the Measurement Model

Factors	Measuring Items	Questions	Factor Loading	Cronbach Alpha
<b>AD</b> (Advertising)	IMC.AD2	I know "X" brand from television and radio.	0.610	0.831
	IMC.AD3	I know "X" brand from print media such as magazines, leaflet and newspaper.	0.781	
	IMC.AD5	I know "X" brand from outdoor media such as the Billboard, BTS and street.	0.785	
	IMC.AD6	I know "X" brand from online media such as website and face-book.	0.707	
<b>SP</b> (Sale Promotion)	IMC.SP1	I know "X" brand from price discount promotion.	0.837	0.934
	IMC.SP2	I know "X" brand from "Buy 1 get 1 free".	0.923	
	IMC.SP3	I know "X" brand from premium complementary.	0.924	
	IMC.SP4	I know "X" brand from the discount sale promotion from festive event (New Year, Songkran)	0.840	
<b>BA</b> (Brand Awareness)	BA.RC3.1	I can recall "X" brand for chicken products.	0.624	0.889
	BA.RC3.2	I can recall "X" brand for pork products.	0.600	
	BA.RC3.3	I can recall "X" brand for egg products.	0.611	
	BA.RCN5.1	"I remember easily the characteristics of brand X"	0.890	
	BA.RCN5.2	"I remember easily the logo of the brand X"	0.798	
	BA.RCN5.3	"I know what the brand X looks like"	0.637	
	BA.RCN5.4	"I can recognize the brand X among other brands"	0.829	
	BA.RCN5.5	"I am very aware of X"; "the brand X is very familiar to me"	0.832	
BA.RCN5.6	"I will introduce "X" brand to others"	0.753		

Table 2 : Standardized Direct, Indirect and Total Effect

Variable	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect
AD -> SP	0.676	-	0.676
AD -> BA	0.244	0.103	0.347
SP -> BA	0.152	-	0.152

The Chi-Square value is the traditional measure for evaluating overall model fit, Carmine and McIver (1981) with a recommend relative chi-square ( $X^2/df$ ) of 2:1 or 3:1. A root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) value below 0.08 indicates a reasonable error of approximation. The suggested goodness of fit index (GFI) value for an acceptable model is above 0.90. The other fit measures like Normed Fit Index (NFI), and

Comparative Fit Index (CFI) were found to be more than 0.90 showing a well-fitting model. Also the Relative Fit Index (RFI), Incremental Index of Fit (IFI), and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) were above 0.90 also indicating a good fit Hu, L.-T., & Bentler, P. (1999). Table 3 provides the values of the fit indices of the model. It indicates that the model is considered an acceptable fit to the Goodness-of-Fit indices at the presented values of;  $X^2/df = 2.553$ ,  $GFI = 0.939$ ,  $RFI =$

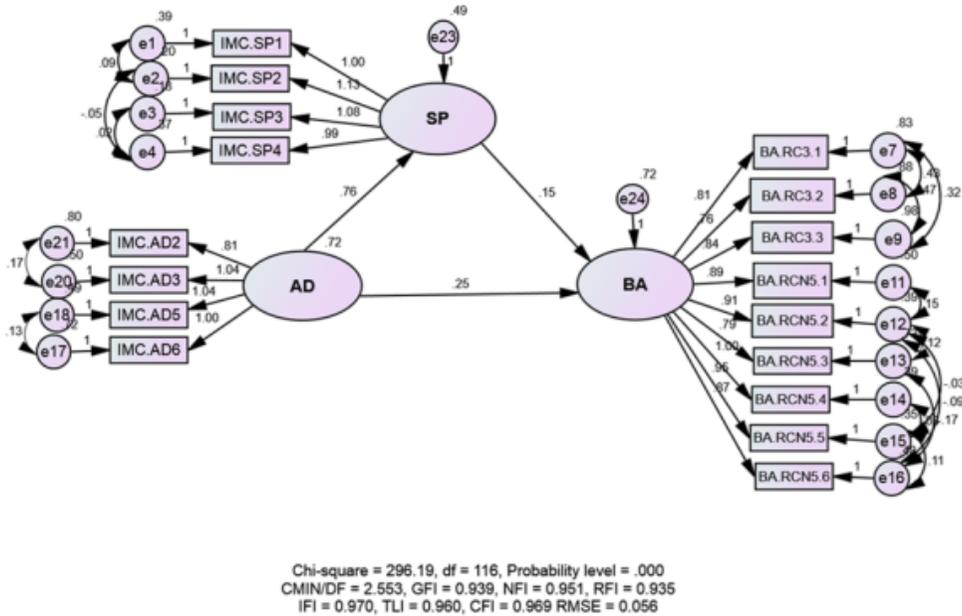


Figure 1: CFA of the casual relationships of advertising, sale promotion and brand awareness

0.935, IFI = 0.970, TLI = 0.960, CFI = 0.969 and RMSA = 0.056.

In conclusion, in the hypothesis testing (supplied by AMOS), the estimated structural model supported all hypothesized relationships, as shown in Table 4. As shown in Figure 1, advertisement had a significant positive effects on sales promotion (S.E. = 0.69, C.R = 11.087 and P Value = 0.000), and brand awareness (S.E. = 0.87, C.R = 3.035 and P Value = 0.002). Meanwhile, sales promotions also had significant positive effects on brand awareness (S.E. = 0.69, C.R = 2.118 and P Value = 0.034). As a result, the hypotheses of H1, H2 and H3 are considered significant and are therefore accepted.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The research results indicate that advertising has significant positive effects on brand awareness and sales promotion. Correspondingly, the sales promotions have a significant positive effect on brand awareness. The model indicates that advertising has both direct and indirect effects on brand awareness through sales promotion. Moreover, advertising awareness can enhance and create both brand awareness and sales promotion. It shows that advertising acts as a good source of meaning and identity for a brand by enhancing brand awareness and sales promotion. Yoo, Donthu and Lee (2000),

**Table 3: Measurement Model Fit Indices**

<b>Model Fit Summary</b>	<b>Recommended Value</b>	<b>Results</b>
CMIN/ DF	< 5.0 (Loo and Thorpe, 2000)	2.553
GFI	> 0.90 (Hu and Bentler P., 1999)	0.939
NFI	≥ 0.90 (Hu and Bentler P., 1999)	0.951
RFI	≥ 0.90 (Hu and Bentler P., 1999)	0.935
IFI	≥ 0.90 (Hu and Bentler P.,1999)	0.970
TLI	≥ 0.90 (Hu and Bentler P.,1999)	0.960
CFI	≥ 0.90 (Hu and Bentler P.,1999)	0.969
RMSEA	< 0.08	0.056

**Table 4: The Result of Structural Model**

			<b>Estimate</b>	<b>S.E.</b>	<b>C.R.</b>	<b>P-Value</b>	<b>Hypothesis Testing</b>
SP	←	AD	0.759	0.069	11.087	***	Accepted
BA	←	SP	0.146	0.069	2.118	0.034	Accepted
BA	←	AD	0.264	0.087	3.035	0.002	Accepted

\*\*\* Significant level at 0.00, 0.01 and 0.00

evaluated the selected marketing mix and brand equity. The results indicated that many promotions such as price discount, are connected with brand equity, while high spend advertising cost, high price, good mental image, and high distribution power, are linked to high brand equity. Therefore, we can consider advertising awareness as important and integral to a brand’s equity in comparison to other dimensions. The marketing and brand managers can create brand equity through social

media by focusing on the creation of awareness on advertising.

This implies that, in order to increase brand equity, food companies should focus on efforts to build awareness to their advertising by focusing on the components which create this awareness. It is important to provide advertising through various types of mass media contents such as television, radio, and on-line (videos, audio files, photo, etc.) to create this awareness as well as the implementation of integrated

marketing communication. Brand awareness can affect the behavior of consumers, and has a positive effect on the perceptions and behaviors towards the brand. Advertising and price promotion enable customers to know a particular brand and judge it based on knowledge stored in memory. Advertising may help to inform the process of customers purchase decisions and can therefore help a company to build and maintain brand equity. Also, it is used to inform, forcing customers to remember about a particular brand. Therefore, advertising on brand awareness and brand image has a positive effect. It also has a positive effect on customer loyalty regarding brands for which they have used a product previously.

By contrast, much research has been conducted on the possible positive and negative consequences of sales promotion for a brand. The study of Chu and Keh (2006), found that advertising spend can reach a saturation point beyond which further spend does not significantly contribute to creating brand equity. They investigated the effects of advertising, promotion, and R&D expenses on brand value creation and found that these lagged expenses yield diminishing returns to brand value. Likewise, the sales promotion can only be applied as a short-term strategy to arouse the brand awareness of consumers. With reference to Villarejo –Ramos et al. (2005), sales promotion deals in

general and especially price deals have been considered to weaken brand equity in spite of the short term benefit that they provide through a short-term attraction to the consumer. Frequent price promotions would harm brand equity because it is a short-term sales push strategy. Villarejo and Sánchez (2005) also focused their study on advertising spend and price promotions, while Bravo et al. (2007) add to these variables the effect of the price and focused on the role of two specific marketing communication tools, which were advertising and sales promotions. These two marketing elements account for at least 25% of UK marketing budgets. Despite their importance, the influence of these variables on brand equity still remains unclear (Netemeyer et al., 2004; Chu and Keh, 2006).

They are therefore, an erroneous way of trying to build a strong brand as they are easily imitated and counteracted by competitors. In addition, their temporary nature creates a feeling of short-lived benefit for the consumers when the sale promotion finishes. Therefore, the marketer should be aware of this point to promote the long-term brand building as well as the various dimension analysis of an effective marketing campaign for that product and situation. Advertising and sales promotions enable customers to know a particular brand and judge it based on knowledge stored in memory. Since the food business is

quite dynamic, marketing will always require updating to follow the trend, a well-planned integrated marketing communication strategy will reach the target audience directly, and will be an important part to create brand loyalty and gain a competitive advantage. In summary, the study goals were reached and the study provided a model to enhance the brand awareness and brand loyalty using media, and gives several important implications for strategic brand management.

### **RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

There are some limitations of the study. First, this study does not consider all the dimensions of brand equity. Therefore, future research should include a following study to show the effect of more dimensions, like brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand image and others. Additionally, the subject of this study focused only on food business in a wholesale shop. It is suggested that future research can expand the area of the study to other fields of business and the retail sales channel for comparison of the results. In summary, we should try to replace this study with more product categories and sales channels. For the future research, the additional recommendations, are as follows:

1. This study was designed only to investigate the particular customers in Bangkok and metropolitan areas. Future

research should expand the sample size to cover other provinces and compare results by different regions.

2. This study offered evidence that IMC (advertising and sales promotion) is strongly related to enhancing marketing performance and significantly effects the incidence of higher brand awareness in a food business. To keeping updated on consumer behavior, the researcher should closely investigate their needs. In the meantime, the brand marketing manager must focus and continually spend on advertising in order to gain more trustworthiness.
3. This study applied a questionnaire as the tool for quantitative research. Future research should study more about how consumer insight needs are influenced by their mass media perception and the research should be conducted as in-depth qualitative interviews or use a focus group method to specify the customer needs and opinions, which will be utilized for a further marketing communication strategy.
4. To develop the effective marketing communication for the target customer, future research should further study the influences of new mass media, for example, on-line media or instore media, on their customer purchase intentions and brand

loyalty criteria. Research should be done continuously, as brand awareness has a direct effect on the purchasing decisions of consumers and can be changed by their communication of satisfaction with product contents. Research results suggest that the company should encourage purchasing intentions from new customers, and repeat orders for the product from the existing customers, through advertising and sales promotion. In the meantime, the company must maintain their customers through brand loyalty to make them life-time customers.

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