

Causal Relationship of Branding, Integrated Marketing Communication, Corporate Image and Parents' loyalty to Regular Private Schools in the Upper Northern Region of Thailand.

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Abstract: *The purposes of this research were (1) to study the importance of branding, integrated marketing communications, corporate image and parents' loyalty, and (2) to consider causal relationship of branding, integrated marketing communications, corporate image and parents' loyalty to private schools in the upper northern region of Thailand. The samples were collected from the parents having two or more children of 301 private schools in the upper northern region of Thailand, studying in kindergarten, elementary or at the secondary level. The data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed with descriptive statistics of percentage, mean, standard deviation and inferential statistics by structural equation model: SEM) and use the Amos program. The results of this research will be useful for private school administrators to determine marketing strategies or find ways to use integrated marketing communications tools which can be appropriate to the situation and truly reach the school parents. This is accepted, confident, and trust in school management. Finally, parents are loyal to the organization, able to communicate with organizational commitment or an attitude towards the organization that reflects the relevance system that parents or those who are involved have confidence, faith, love, and cherish to the organization.*

Index Terms: *Branding, Integrated Marketing Communications, Corporate Image and Parents' loyalty.*

I. INTRODUCTION

At present, Thailand emphasizes the education management. In particular, the government of General Prayut Chan-ocha will be very interested and aware in order to solve the problems of Thai education, which results in the decline of students, school disparity in quality as well as the educational budget of the government and the private sector with no parity. From the above situation, it was found that private schools were gradually closed, especially in the upper northern region of Thailand, consisting of 8 Provinces include Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Phrae, Nan, Phayao, Lampang, Lamphun, and Mae Hong Son. There are 301 private schools in general. The number of students decreases every year. Such problems have affected the dismissal of teachers in private schools. [1] In the last 20 years, private schools in the north have gradually closed down more than 50 places, most of which have dissolved their businesses because of the need to do other business with more income and profitable. [2] While many schools quit their businesses because their heirs do not want to inherit the business because of the difficulties and obstacles in managing the form of marketing communication and information to be diverse in order to reach parents. Moreover, the welfare of teachers is different from government schools. The progress of the work that private school teachers cannot do with academic standing like government school teachers, resulting in the strength of the private school brand image because internal management is not as systematic as it should, including the development of various academic knowledge. There are quite a few opportunities. [3] School administrators therefore need to seek new

ways or strategies in marketing to reinforce work within the organization for the development of educational quality by finding ways to promote and improve quality of continuous standards to be able to compete with government schools and at the same time, must create a selling point or unique identity of a private school that is clear or different than the competitors to create the image and reputation for the school. [4] To look at the image of the school that parents will choose for their children to continue their education is very important. Good schools have a vision that is far-reaching; improve the quality of various factors at all times with efficiency. This results in maximum effectiveness and responds to the needs of parents to choose a good, efficient, and effective school that is appropriate for their children. [5] Ordinary private schools are competing in quality and academia, which in this competitive quality and academic situation make students and parents have the desire to receive quality and the most beneficial education services. [6] Some private schools can still survive because of its long-standing reputation, its distinctive image, and identity. Therefore, school administrators should take into account stakeholders, such as students, teachers, parents, personnel, janitors and housewives. Because what parents and students are interested in is the modern education system and curriculum including the facilities in the school that create appeal to those who have contributed. [7] In the past, it was found that private schools still neglected to create brand identity (schools), direct marketing and sales promotion in order to truly match the customers.

With the aforementioned circumstances, the ordinary private schools in the northern region need to pay attention to the specific characteristics of the school in the form of marketing communication in various forms such as public relations, advertising, and organizing academic activities in order to reach the target group as much as possible. Creating a school image to stand out from the competition because the image is a holistic way of connecting ideas, satisfaction by parents who are satisfied and impressed it will help to attract new students by telling or suggesting as Word of Mouth. [8] Another thing, creating corporate branding is another important aspect of the company and then results to the stakeholders of the organization in order to create a bond with the organization that owns those products and services which will support the organization in every aspect and create loyalty to the organization in the long run. In addition, [9] that brand value is an important indicator of a strong brand and was created with an effective brand management process, thus allowing each school to focus on the development of the school's own brand continuously and sustainably.

Although branding for schools is a concept that has been discussed and accepted for a long time. But considering in the context of the educational administration of each school in Thailand, it is found that there are still very few studies that do not give importance to this. Therefore, administrators should be aware of branding in order to gain awareness in marketing communication, such as integration in many forms, because it can create the potential of a private school brand sustainably. All schools have to adjust the management paradigm dramatically for long-term survival. [10] For this reason, the researchers consequently realize the need to study the causal relationship of branding elements, integrated marketing communication, organization image, and parents' loyalty to ordinary private schools in the northern region as a guideline for developing schools to have quality and to be standardized.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1) To study the importance of branding, integrated marketing communication, corporate image, and loyalty of parents of ordinary private schools in the northern region.
- 2) To consider the causal relationship of branding, integrated marketing communication, corporate image, and parents' loyalty to ordinary private schools in the northern region

III. Literature Review

Results from the literature review, the researcher created 4 relevant variables: (1) branding elements (2) integrated marketing communications (3) organization image and 4) loyalty as the following details:

1. Branding

Aaker (2002) [11] has given the idea that the brand is an asset or the value of the entire organization, consisting of (1) brand name awareness (2) brand loyalty (3) perceived quality and (4) brand associations. The branding creation is caused as a result of intense competition from the economic, social and government policies, private schools have to struggle to survive, whether using marketing strategies, quality control, and management. However, most importantly, schools need to have effective management, no need to be a large school that requires students and many faculty members, but focus on academic quality. There are outstanding courses, flexible management, advertising, public relations access. The organization has modern technology including branding in their own school which consists of quality awareness, brand awareness, integrity with the brand and brand relationships. The branding can help integrated marketing communication to be effective and achieve the goals set forth [12] as the following hypothesis 1

H1: Branding creation influences integrated marketing communication.

2. Integrated Marketing Communication

Schultz, (1993) [13] said that the tools of integrated marketing communication are communication that covers all forms of communication by taking into account the suitability for that consumer group or what the operator or organization can perform in 5 ways: 1) Advertising 2) Personal Selling 3) Sale Promotion 4) Public Relation and 5) Direct Marketing. But which tool will be chosen, it depends on the situation and the competitive status at that time because integrated marketing communication can help brand creation run efficiently and achieve the results as required and must combine the use of various marketing communication tools to be perfectly consistent under the marketing goals [14], [15], [16] as the following hypothesis 2.

H2: Integrated marketing communication influences branding creation.

3. Corporate Image

Wirat Aphirattanakul (2003) [17] has classified the image into 4 categories as follows: 1) Corporate Image 2) Institutional Image 3) Product / Service Image and 4) Brand Image, but] which tool will be chosen to create the image of the organization according to which type it depends on the mission and marketing strategy of the organization because the image and reputation of the organization is not something that can be created in a short time but must be built with a continuous process in the long run. The image can be changed according to the circumstances and the changing environment. In each era the process of creating an image will start with the organization's identity, such as defining symbols, logo, slogan, and the color of the organization. After that, marketing communication will be used as the key to developing the identity that is defined as the image of the organization. The marketing communication must be clear, focus on history or good story and must focus on both external and internal communication which external communication will make society aware of information about the organization. As for internal communication, the organization will create personnel to be aware of information, providing knowledge, understanding, and being representative in presenting the good image of the organization. [18]

Integrated marketing communication including branding can help make the image perceived and understood by the organization. In the end, the response will be made in terms of ideas; the feeling of the organization's meaning is Judgments and Feelings [19], [20], [21], [22], [23] as the following hypothesis 3, 4.

H3: Integrated marketing communication influences organizational image.

H4: Branding creation influences the image of the organization.

4. Brand Loyalty

Brand Loyalty means that consumers have a positive attitude towards a brand, regardless of whether they are confident, thinking about, and or directly satisfying the consumer. In the end, repeated purchases were made. Consumers love and believe in one brand product that is difficult to change to use other brands because consumers will feel familiar with that brand, be honest with the brand. Consumers are satisfied with a particular brand of product and buy that product with familiarity. In addition,

Siriwan Serirat and et al. (2013) [24] said that brand loyalty is honest. Brand loyalty will affect the purchase of that product the next time. If consumers are highly loyal to the brand it is called a good attitude towards the brand. The concept of Damrongsak Chaisanit (1994, page 106-107) [25] concludes that the behavior that has been consistently performed on the purchase of products in a particular brand of products is repeated on a regular basis. It will inevitably cause loyalty in the brand or logo that is important. If the product manufacturer wants to create loyalty to their products, it is a matter that requires money and time. But if it is done successfully, it will be as a guarantee of the stability in selling products in the future and also causes viral advertising as Word of Mouth or consumers will tell others too.

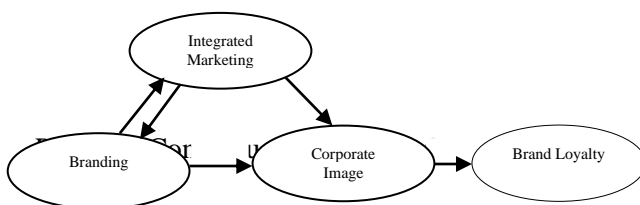
In conclusion, brand loyalty in behavioral aspects can be considered continuously from repeated buying behavior. The buying behavior is the result of consumers having a good attitude towards the brand. Therefore, the results of the concept and the theory conclude that the image has direct influence on brand loyalty as the following hypothesis 5.

H: 5 The image influences brand loyalty

Use either SI (MKS) or CGS as primary units. (SI units are strongly encouraged.) English units may be used as secondary units (in parentheses). **This applies to papers in**

IV. Conceptual Framework

Review of relevant literature and research both domestically and internationally. The researcher synthesizes a conceptual framework for research as shown in Figure 1 below.



V. Methodology

The researcher uses a mixed method, both quantitative research and qualitative research applied together in order to achieve objectives and answer research questions depending on the appropriate form of the research methodology, both methods [26] (Smite, 2012). The researcher proposed by seeking information and analyzed using quantitative research under latent variables. Research hypothesis obtained from literature review and qualitative research in order to confirm the data obtained from quantitative analysis.

VI. Sample and Procedure

Population used in this research, the researcher considered the unit of analysis, which is the parents of students who are studying in the general private schools in the upper northern region, 8 provinces, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Phrae, Nan, Phayao, Lampang, Lamphun and Mae Hong Son province total 301 educational institutions, including large, medium, and small educational institutions [27] (Office of the Private Education Commission, 2017). Quantitative research tools were questionnaires divided into 3 parts as follows:

Part1 General Information of respondents includes gender, age, status, education level, number of children studying, and reasons for choosing a school. The characteristics of the question will be multiple choice questions, closed-ended questions, to choose only one question that is the truest.

Part 2 is a measurement tool that is the main variable in data collection. It consists of the following information: (1) Branding (2) Integrative marketing communication (3) Corporate image and (4) Brand loyalty.

Part 3 is an open-ended questionnaire. So that parents can express their opinions about the performance or other related issues.

Quantitative research will have descriptive statistical processing and inference statistics based on the Structural Equation Model (SEM) and using the Amos program. After that, bring the results to

summarize and discuss the results through integration with the concept, related theories and research as well as providing additional suggestions from information obtained from the questionnaire.

The qualitative research tool is an in-depth interview as semi-structure in-depth interview created according to the literature reviewed in order to cover this research. The researcher conducted a complete examination of the data with a triangular examination (triangulation) [28] The final sequence brings the results of content analysis to summarize and provide suggestions to support quantitative research. The research period is 1 year from October 2018 - March 2019.

VII. Results

The research on “Causal relationship of branding, integrated marketing communication, corporate image and parents' loyalty to regular private schools in the upper northern region of Thailand” is an important aspect of competition in today's era because of creating recognition for the stakeholders, acknowledge, and access important and accurate information. It is necessary to use marketing communication in many ways, such as Integrated Marketing Communication, Internal Branding, as if communicating the brand's commitment to customers or those involved because it will influence the creation of attitudes about Brand creation for employees or parents which consists of the commitment of school administrators and staff towards the goal of branding including the feeling that the brand is a part of the executives or employees in the organization in order for those involved to be loyal to the organization. Finally, the organization can create competitive advantage over the competitors in the end.

With the increasingly competitive business environment, the organization may have to be in the state of being chosen rather than being a chooser. Therefore, to survive and grow even more organizations need to focus on creating their own brands correctly and seriously. For the image of the organization to be outstanding and get results and can influence the decision to choose to use the services of customers by creating a strong brand through the production of products with high benefits and offering services with effective systems ultimately resulting in long-term survival of the organization.

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