

ผลกระทบของส่วนประสมทางการตลาดต่อคุณค่า ตราสินค้าและความภักดีของลูกค้า: ธุรกิจบริการ โทรคมนาคมในประเทศไทย

IMPACT OF MARKETING MIX ON BRAND EQUITY TOWARDS CUSTOMER LOYALTY: AN EVIDENCE OF A TELECOM SERVICE IN MYANMAR

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บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาผลกระทบของส่วนประสมการตลาดและคุณค่าตราสินค้าต่อความภักดีของลูกค้า เพื่อตอบสนองการสร้างตราสินค้าสำหรับธุรกิจบริการโทรคมนาคมของประเทศไทย ประชากรที่ใช้ในการวิจัยคือ กลุ่มผู้ใช้บริการโทรศัพท์ของเทลเนอร์ในเมืองเนปิดอร์ จำนวน 400 คน โดยใช้เทคนิคการสุ่มตัวอย่างโดยไม่ใช้ความน่าจะเป็นในการเก็บข้อมูลจากกลุ่มตัวอย่าง การวิเคราะห์การถดถอยพหุคูณได้ถูกนำมาใช้ในการศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างตัวแปร

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ส่วนประสมทางการตลาดด้านผลิตภัณฑ์ ด้านการจัดจำหน่าย และด้านกระบวนการ มีอิทธิพลในเชิงบวกต่อคุณค่าตราสินค้า นอกจากนี้ส่วนประสมการตลาดด้านผลิตภัณฑ์ ด้านการจัดจำหน่าย ด้านบุคคล ด้านกระบวนการ และด้านกายภาพและการนำเสนอ ยังมีความสำคัญในเชิงบวกต่อความภักดีของผู้บริโภคอีกด้วย จากผลการศึกษายังพบว่า คุณค่าตราสินค้าเป็นสิ่งที่สำคัญที่สุดสำหรับนักการตลาดในวันนี้ โดยเฉพาะเมื่อเทียบกับสิ่งที่นำมาใช้ในการสร้างความภักดีของลูกค้าในอดีต ผลการวิจัยชี้ให้เห็นว่านักการตลาดในธุรกิจโทรคมนาคมควรให้ความสำคัญกับกลยุทธ์ส่วนประสมทางการตลาด ซึ่งจะช่วยสร้างคุณค่าตราสินค้าและความภักดีของลูกค้าได้ดียิ่งขึ้น

คำสำคัญ: ส่วนประสมทางการตลาด ความภักดีของลูกค้า คุณค่าตราสินค้า บริการโทรคมนาคม

Abstract

This paper aims to identify the effects of marketing mix and brand equity on its customer loyalty. To satisfy the main objective, a brand of telecom service in Myanmar was examined. The targeted population of this research was 400 consumers who use Telenor Telecom Service in Naypyidaw. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was incorporated as sampling technique to gather the data from the respondents. Multiple regression analysis was tested to explore the relationships between the variables.

It was found that some of 7P's of marketing mix are positively influences dimensions of brand equity, namely: Product, Place, People, and Process. Also, 7P's of marketing mix showed positively significance through the consumer loyalty. There is also evidence that brand equity is the most important to marketers today, particularly in relation to the known antecedents to customer loyalty. The results suggest that the telecom service marketers may put more emphasis on marketing mix strategies such as Product, Place, People, Process and Physical evidence that enhance brand equity and customer loyalty.

Keywords: Marketing Mix, Customer Loyalty, Brand Equity, Telecom Service

Introduction

In these days, telecommunication service becomes the most essential one in people's daily lives all over the world, it also plays a vital role to communicate each other, as well as to be able to connect via internet. Telecommunication business becomes more and more competitive, especially in Myanmar because of the opening of market for foreign direct investment, many providers offer not only telephone, but related services, while customers have a lower switching cost to choose any company. Thus, the providers need to gain customer satisfaction because it impacts only business bottom line, but also retention rate, it is important to build customer loyalty via marketing mix and brand equity. To maintain a high level of brand equity for creating loyal customers, telecommunication operators provide different attractions to take over market share by developing different strategies and succession plans of reaching goals via their knowledge of marketing mix. The customer satisfaction for loyalty by building brand equity is a key in marketing as it is an index to recognize on how products or services of the company can provide the customer needs or expectations. This study focuses on investigating the brand equity of using the case of a telecom service provider in Myanmar according to the 7P's of marketing mix.

Myanmar is an emerging country, its economy have been becoming more advanced. Among the changes, telecommunication is one of the key supplies in country developed project that is also including. In year 2014, Myanmar Post and Telecommunication (MPT) played as the former one company that controls too much on operator. When the government began to allow the foreign investment, two foreign operators; Ooredoo (Qatar) and Telenor (Norway) has entered Myanmar's Telecom area with 51% hold joint venture while 49% is for foreign partner.

To date, telecom business market will be more and more competitive. In Myanmar, the mobile market becomes competitive. There are three major players, namely MPT, Telenor (Norway), and Ooredoo (Qatar). According to the increasing numbers of telecom services, these three telecom companies try to get more market share by competing each other. At the same time, each they use different marketing strategies to get more customer retention. Fair competition forces three competitive telecom Service to put in place the right marketing strategies on new and repeat mobile users. As a result, their ability to keep their brand equity has come out as a major retention factor. The state-owned, former monopoly operator, MPT provides both fixed and wireless communication services with now 23 million users while Telenor is subscribed by 19 million and Ooredoo is 8 million (Nyunt, 2017). The companies are attempting to draw more customers than the competitors. Among these three major focused operators, Telenor and Ooredoo are quick in their promotional vehicles. Obviously, there may see many blue and red shelter hawker and tea shop in Myanmar that are paid for and supported by Red for Ooredoo and Blue for Telenor. Now, MPT is planning to expand its market to reach 90% of South East Asia countries' population and increase the mobile broadband footprint to nearly 95% to provide double speed internet access while Telenor was testing to provide 4G technology in five majors cities and Ooredoo was launching Myanmar's very first technology commercial 4G LTE in particular places such as Yangon, Mandalay, and Naypyidaw.

The three telecom services become competitors and they have tried their best to attract their customers. So, this study would like to explore how they try to compete in Telecom service market to get market share more than their competitors. From this exploration, their marketing strategies to maintain brand equity in trying to overcome competitors' market can be known.

Finally, their competitive advantages and core values of their company can also be known. This study is also useful for any other telecom providers by giving the necessary research for Telecom service in Myanmar.

Research Objectives

This study emphasizes on a telecom service which has a good numbers of subscribers in Myanmar. There are four objectives to study of this research.

1. To study the antecedent factors (7P's of marketing mix) that influence customer brand equity of a telecom service.
2. To study the connection between 7P's of marketing mix and brand equity on a telecom service.
3. To examine the relationship between brand equity and customer loyalty of a telecom service.

Literature Review

Basically, three main theories are used to manage and do this research. Those are the theory of 7Ps marketing mix, the explanation of brand equity and the theory of customer loyalty. McCarthy & Perreault (1987) defined marketing mix as controllable variables used by organizations to satisfy a target market. While Kotler & Armstrong (1989) expressed marketing mix as "the set of controllable marketing many variables that the firm blends to produce the response of wants in the target market". According to the Business Dictionary, marketing mix is defined as planned strategies to control the product improvement in term of marketing plan regularly termed as 4P's: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion, which have been applied by the business people all over the world ever since (Goi, 2009). These four elements, in combination with the right and balanced ratio, help firms to efficiently identify a market need and lead them to the path of offering customer satisfaction (Pourdehghan, 2015) that can cause customer loyalty.

A product is branded when target buyers would like to learn about the information of a product. The product is labeled and they memorize and keep in mind the knowledge about the product (Keller, 1993; Krishnan, 1996). These knowledge structures increase the value buyers get from the product by influencing their thinking, feeling and doing with respect to the product. So, the product is of more value when it is branded than unbranded, and this greater value is referred to as brand equity (Aaker, 1991, 1996; Keller, 1993). Target buyer behaves positively toward the product when the brand equity is significant. For example, they pay more for the product, buy it over and over again, start at helpful word-of-mouth behaviors, and so on (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 2008). In this way, a firm can improve its level in competition and increase the financial performance by making its brand stronger. Brand equity as sourced from the knowledge structures may be seen as a set of dimensions. According to Aaker (1996), these dimensions include brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty.

Oliver (2015) and Kotler & Keller (2009) defined loyalty as a commitment deeply held by the customer, to re-buy or to re-patronize a preferred product or service in the future. And it also can facilitate the repeated purchases of the identical brand or identical brand set. In his book of Marketing Management (Kotler & Keller, Marketing Management, 2009), it has four indicators to measure customer loyalty, which are: the customers' purpose to keep buying a particular product/

service, the customer's purpose to do cross-selling, the willingness of the customer to spread positive word-of-mouth about the product/service, and the customer's purpose to offer ideas to the company regarding the development of the product/service. Customer loyalty is one of the most useable indicators for expressing customer's emotion to the loyalty stage on the brand and organization in the greatest form by giving positive option via word-of-mouth because of its index whereas retention of customer on the organization can be indicated as percentage based on long-term relationship. Customers who got satisfaction higher than they expected will return to spend more and more products/services. Therefore, they are keys of the organization since they will refer precious word-of-mouth to the new and potential customers.

Research on IMC has started during 90's mainly in Asia and other countries than the U.S. and the U.K. Davison, 2005, direct relationship between IMC and brand equity was founded from an examination of Canadian tobacco industry. Yoo et al. (2000) also studied by using five marketing mix, namely, price, store images, advertisement, distribution volume, and price preferences as independent, and brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality, and brand association, as dependent ones, to compare with traditional marketing mix, to provide a set of market plan. They found that price, image of store, volume of distribution and advertisement, and brand equity is impacted all of these positively and significantly. Hosseini & Moezzi (2015) applied a descriptive survey studies, in Tehran, Iran, to explore the effects of the marketing mix on customers' preferences in selecting a certain insurance company. Results supported such an effect; and those factor such as length of time, people, service, price, process, location, place, upgrade, and education, had the highest effects on customers' preferences. Sherafatpour et al., (2017) used Acker's model to explore the effect of brand loyalty on brand equity. The population consisted of customers of private bank branches in the area of the area of land of Gilan who had e-cards. Results pointed that loyalty, and quality had a significant effect on brand equity, and that brand awareness affected customer loyalty.

Reza, S. J., Reza, Y. H., Ali, A. S., & Hamzeh, R. (2010) explored the effect of the brand on industrial customers' loyalty. The respondents included photocopy and print service providers across the 22 zones of Tehran, Iran with a sample size of 50. Results showed that brand equity had been the most influencing variables affecting customers' behavioral and attitude related loyalty patterns while factors affecting behavioral vs. attitude-related loyalty patterns might change by research area.

In this study, 7P's of marketing mix theory is used to test which factors have an influence on brand equity towards the customer loyalty of a telecom service in Myanmar. Seven variables are considered as the independent variables: product, price, place, promotion, process, people, and physical evidence. Brand equity and customer loyalty are also deliberated as the dependent variables. The conceptual framework of this research is shown in Figure 1.

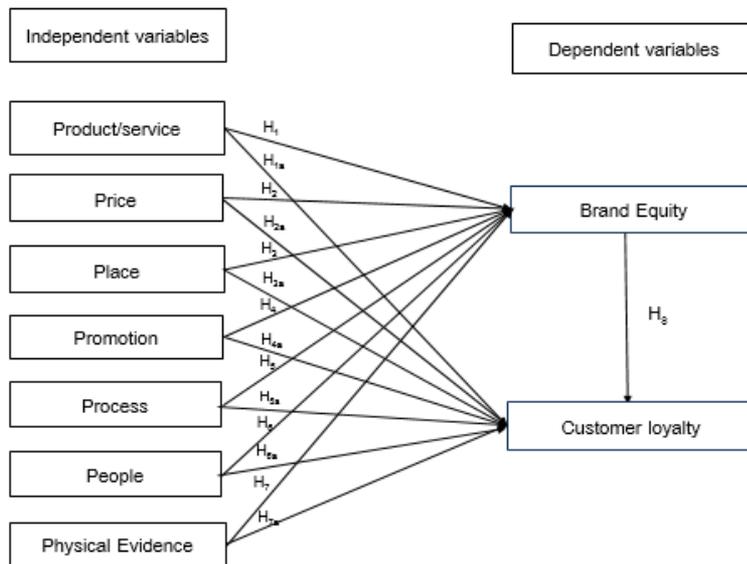


Figure 1 Conceptual Frame work adopted from Mei & Foosiri (2014); Souar, Mahi & Ameer (2015); Ongkowitzo (2015)

In this research, there are fifteen hypotheses to examine and emphasized the objectives of the studies. The following are hypothesized.

- H₁: Product/ Service has a positive influence on brand equity.
- H_{1a}: Product/ Service has a positive influence on customer loyalty.
- H₂: Price has a positive influence on brand equity.
- H_{2a}: Price has a positive influence on customer loyalty.
- H₃: Place has a positive influence on brand equity.
- H_{3a}: Place has a positive influence on customer loyalty.
- H₄: Promotion has a positive influence on brand equity.
- H_{4a}: Promotion has a positive influence on customer loyalty.
- H₅: People has a positive influence on brand equity.
- H_{5a}: People has a positive influence on customer loyalty.
- H₆: Process has a positive influence on brand equity.
- H_{6a}: Process has a positive influence on customer loyalty.
- H₇: Physical evidence has a positive influence on brand equity.
- H_{7a}: Physical evidence has a positive influence on customer loyalty.
- H₈: Brand equity has a positive influence on customer loyalty.

Research Methodology

In this study, a face-to-face questionnaire survey was conducted. Regarding the target population, people in Naypyidaw who use Telenor Telecom service were randomly selected as respondents. While there are 434,000 Telenor users in Naypyidaw, the minimum sample

size 400 was administrated using the Yamane sample size calculation formula. Non-probability purposive sampling technique was incorporated as sampling technique to gather the data from the respondents.

The questionnaire was divided into 3 sections and the variables which were only measured nominally are known as categorical variables. The demographic variables were measured at a nominal level in section one, in which it consisted of demographic information such as gender, marital status, age, and how long they have been using a telecom service. In section two, five-point Likert scales were applied for all questions and designed based on service marketing mix (7P's) to measure brand equity and customer loyalty. Section three was to evaluate the customer expectation in order to collect the information for the future motivated market.

Based on the pilot survey, the measurements for reliability test were administered in order to define the assessment of consistency between multiple measurements of variables. The data was compiled from 400 respondents who were from the public place, and government offices. Descriptive statistics was used to explain demographic information of the respondents. Moreover, the multiple regression analysis was also applied to analyze the relationship and effect of customer perception on marketing mix and customer loyalty as well as brand equity.

Results and Discussion

According to the survey results in Table 1, out of the respondents, 42.7% were male with 171 respondents and 229, 57.3% were female. The majority age of the respondents was 21 to 35 years old with 215 respondents representing 54% total of respondents. Most of the respondents have monthly income between 100,000 Ks and 200,000 Ks representing 42% with 168 respondents. Majority of the respondents have been using telecom service for 1 to 5 years. They represent 68.5% of the total population in this survey.

Table 1: Demographic information of Respondents

Particular	Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	171	42.7
	Female	229	57.3
Age (Years)	Below 20	38	9.5
	20 to 35	216	54.0
	36 to 50	125	31.3
	Above 50	21	5.3
Monthly Income	Less than 100,000 Ks	63	15.8
	100,000 Ks to 200,000 Ks	168	42.0
	200,001 Ks to 500,000 Ks	135	33.8
	500,001 Ks to 1,000,000 Ks	27	6.8
	More than 1,000,000 Ks	7	1.8
Years of Usage	Less than 1 year	126	31.5
	1-5 years	274	68.5

From Table 2, it is found that the product, people and process variables showed a significant positive relationships ($p < 0.05$) on brand equity. It indicates that the respondents are more likely to value more for having a well-known brand of Telecom services, thus, it can generate more revenue simply from brand recognition in terms of improving product, people and process. Likewise, the place variable is another variable found to be significant ($p < 0.1$), meaning that the respondents are more likely to agree that place is an important to maximize brand equity. This is consistent with previous literatures of Aaker (1991); Keller (1993); Yoo, Donthu, & Lee, (2000), and Azadi (2010). Thus, independent hypotheses H1, H3, H5 and H6, are acceptable.

Table 2: Relationship between 7P's of Marketing Mix and Brand Equity

Variables	β	t	Sig.
Constant	1.217*	8.923	0.000
Product	0.187*	4.500	0.000
Price	0.072	1.639	0.102
Place	0.075**	1.696	0.091
Promotion	0.046	1.054	0.293
People	0.103**	2.139	0.033
Process	0.134*	2.937	0.004
Physical Evidence	0.042	0.916	0.360
R ²	0.783		
Adjusted R ²	0.413		
F	41.077	Sig. F=0.000	

Notes: *Significant Level at 0.05, $p < 0.05$, **Significant Level at 0.1, $p < 0.1$

According to the results in Table 3, it can be seen that the marketing mix variables of product, place and people have a significant positive influence ($p < 0.01$) on customer loyalty, meaning that customers who perceived utility functions in terms of product, place and people, thus, customer are willing to make decisions to spend their time, money, and effort to be loyal customers, because customers make judgments about service provision and delivery based on products readily available on the market, effective stores to serve customers and the people representing the organization.

Table 3: Relationship between Marketing Mix and Customer Loyalty

Variables	β	t	Sig.
Constant	0.890*	5.525	0.000
Product	0.144*	2.938	0.003
Price	-0.049	-0.945	0.345
Place	0.229*	4.387	0.000
Promotion	0.041	0.794	0.428
People	0.198*	3.477	0.001
Process	0.090***	1.659	0.098
Physical Evidence	0.098***	1.808	0.071
R ²	0.872		
Adjusted R ²	0.395		
F	38.288	Sig. F=0.000	

Notes: *Coefficient is significant at *0.01, ** 0.05, ***0.1

While the coefficients on process and physical evidence variables are positive and significant ($p < 0.1$), which mean that people are more likely to be loyal customers, since the telecom service provider could make the customer have an impression on the efficient service delivery and physical surrounding of a store. This research study found that the hypothesis of marketing mix (H_{1a} , H_{3a} , H_{5a} , H_{6a} and H7a) has affected to customer loyalty at the significant level ($p < 0.1$). According to the previous literatures of Muala and Qurneh (2012) and Wahab et al. (2016), they also agreed that marketing mix has an influence to the customer loyalty.

Table 4: Relationship between Brand Equity and Customer Loyalty

Variables	β	t	Sig.
Constant	0.965*	6.075	0.000
Brand Equity	0.722*	15.775	0.000
R ²	0.385		
Adjusted R ²	0.383		
F	248.847	Sig. F=0.000	

Note: Coefficient is significant at *0.01.

According to the results in Table 4, it is found that brand equity has a statistically significant with customer loyalty at $p < 0.01$ level. As a result, the brand equity is important for the Myanmar people to get the brand awareness and customer loyalty when company provides the good brand equity. Therefore, this hypothesis agreed that Myanmar people perceive the brand equity especially to enhance the customer loyalty and the quality of the user experience for long term in the purchase decision process. Thus, the hypothesis H8 has been supported as the consistency with previous literatures of Mohammad (2015).

Table 5: Summary of hypotheses

Hypothesis	Effect	Test Result
H ₁ Product/ Service has a positive influence on brand equity	Positive	Accepted
H ₂ Price has a positive influence on brand equity	Negative	Rejected
H ₃ Place has a positive influence on brand equity	Positive	Accepted
H ₄ Promotion has a positive influence on brand equity	Negative	Rejected
H ₅ People has a positive influence on brand equity	Positive	Accepted
H ₆ Process has a positive influence on brand equity	Positive	Accepted
H ₇ Physical Evidence has a positive influence on brand equity	Negative	Rejected
H _{1a} Product / Service has a positive influence on customer loyalty	Positive	Accepted
H _{2a} Price has a positive influence on customer loyalty	Negative	Rejected
H _{3a} Place has a positive influence on customer loyalty	Positive	Accepted
H _{4a} Promotion has a positive influence on customer loyalty	Negative	Rejected
H _{5a} People has a positive influence on customer loyalty	Positive	Accepted
H _{6a} Process has a positive influence on customer loyalty	Positive	Accepted
H _{7a} Physical Evidence has a positive influence on customer loyalty	Positive	Accepted
H ₈ Brand equity has a positive influence on customer loyalty	Positive	Accepted

Paul and Rana (2012) suggested that the multiple regression model is used to calculate the relationship between the various factors. According to Table 5, it was found that brand equity, customer perception on product, place, people and process are important variables, since customer perception on those activities have positive influence on brand equity of a Telecom service provider in Myanmar. But for customer loyalty, customer perception on product, place, people, process and physical evidence have positive influence on customer loyalty of Telecom service in Myanmar. Although the hypotheses of price and promotion on brand equity and customer loyalty (H₂, H_{2a}, H₄, H_{4a}, H₇), are not accepted by regression analysis, the relationships are positive. Hence, these two activities are not much important to get brand equity and customer loyalty for Telecom service in Myanmar.

Conclusion

All of the results of the survey questions collected from 400 respondents are discussed after being analyzed by the statistics software and the investigation of marketing mix activities are done to relate to brand equity and customer loyalty by using descriptive statistics and regression analysis.

In this study, customer perception on product, place, people, and process give significant impact on both brand equity and customer loyalty. But customer perception on price and promotion do not give significant impact on both brand equity and customer loyalty.

Physical evidence gives significance impact on customer loyalty but not on brand equity. Therefore, while customer perception of product, place, people and process show positive influence on brand equity, there is also positive influence of product, place, people, process, and physical evidence on customer loyalty. Moreover, brand equity gives significant impact on customer loyalty. Therefore, there is a positive influence of brand equity on customer loyalty of Telenor telecom service.

Recommendation

According to the results, the following recommendations are found regarding marketing mix activities to get customer loyalty through brand equity.

In creating customer loyalty, it is recommended that perceived quality, brand awareness and brand loyalty are the life-blood in constituting brand equity. The telecom service should maintain its high quality services and brand image by offering personalized services to meet customers' needs. Moreover, providing timely information when there are new services will sharpen company's brand image.

It was found that relationships between customer perception on products, place, people and process and brand equity are accepted. For customer loyalty, relationships with customer perception on product, place, people, process and physical evidence are accepted.

Product: The telecom service should maintain its high quality services and brand image by offering personalized services to meet customers' needs. Moreover, providing timely information when there are new services will sharpen company's brand image. In Telenor telecom service, products and services should meet customers' need to achieve expected impact. Despite good brand image among other telecom companies, the complaints handling and customer services should be more effective. While the variety of products such as mobile internet package should be available for more choices, mobile signal is still needed to be always good and convenient not only in urban but also in some distant places.

Place: More stores should sell service provider, as compared to its competing brands. The number of the stores that deal with service provider should be more than that of its competing brands for the customers' ease of availability. This telecom service should be distributed through as many stores as possible. Although the telecom service provider provides many stores and corporate website to serve customers, the ability of handling customers' complaints still has many points of weakness and bad feedback. The telecom service marketers should establish the effective system that can explain and solve the problems concerning all goods and services.

People: Because customers trust is based on the company and its employees, responsible employees should prepare to be asked questions of what is not being done right by treating the customers fairly and by responding to customers in constructive and caring manner. They should be trained for necessary knowledgeable not only about their products and services but also about customer relationship management. The employees should be more skillful in carrying out their respective responsibilities. But for the service company, it is essential and urgent to get customers' satisfaction on both the products and services by maintaining and drawing their positive feedback since the customers are the best in promotion themselves via word of mouth. Therefore employees should be trained for enthusiasm to respond the customers' questions in effective and efficient ways.

Process: The management should make the required adjustments to meet customers' needs. All employees in this company need to strongly value customers and are essential to know the importance of processes that set up useful shift. This may be resulted vice versa in excellent problem solving by the employees. Concerning its process system, its products should be differentiated and based on customers' convenience. The processing system should be efficient and effective, more and more, in overall operation including customer survey.

Physical Evidence: Store image, store layout, and convenient waiting areas are flexible in current time. But the decoration and maintenance should be stable and improved for further reputation and image of the company.

Limitation: This study has the limited scope and time such as the cost of traveling and limited time for both respondents and researcher when the data was collecting in Naypyidaw, Myanmar. This study also has some constraints because customer loyalty is not only a psychological factor but also an important factor for the company growth. Some factors that may be relevant to the growth were not considered. Since the study was focused on only in Naypyidaw, further research should be done to cover total population in Myanmar. Moreover, in future research, some important factors like the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty can be considered.

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