

EXAMINING KEY INFLUENCERS OF BRAND EXPERIENCE ON CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT IN THAILAND’S AESTHETIC SECTOR

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Abstract

Through a comprehensive literature review, this study develops a conceptual framework that examines the relationships between service fairness, service experience, perceived brand ethicality, brand experience, and customer engagement in Thailand's aesthetic industry. The framework, derived from the analysis of existing literature, demonstrates how fair treatment, quality service experiences, and ethical perceptions collectively shape brand experience and subsequently influence customer engagement. By synthesizing prior research, this study positions brand experience as a key mediating factor, illuminating the theoretical pathways through which aesthetic service providers can cultivate stronger client relationships. The literature-based framework provides theoretical insights for industry practitioners seeking to enhance customer engagement through service excellence and ethical brand alignment. This research extends the customer engagement literature by highlighting how ethical considerations and service quality interact to build brand experience and foster engagement in the aesthetic sector, as evidenced by existing scholarly work.

Keywords: Aesthetic, Brand Experience, Customer Engagement, Perceive Brand Ethicality, Service Experience, Service Fairness

Introduction

The global aesthetic industry has emerged as a prominent sector in recent years, driven by increasing consumer demand for beauty and wellness services (Atiyeh et al., 2020). As a global trend, the industry is expanding rapidly, particularly in Thailand, where aesthetic services become highly adopted due to rising disposable incomes, social media influence, and a heightened focus on personal appearance (Han et al., 2020). The aesthetic sector encompasses a range of services, from skincare treatments to minimally invasive procedures, and relies heavily on customer perceptions of quality, ethical practices, and service experiences (Koncul, 2012; Sangpikul, 2019). In this context, understanding how consumer perceived service quality and ethical standard contribute to brand experience and customer engagement. This is essential for practitioners aiming to build client relationships and foster loyalty in a competitive market.

Research Objectives

1. To review the literature on service fairness, service experience, brand experience, and perceived brand ethicality as drivers of customer engagement in Thailand’s aesthetic industry.
2. To propose a conceptual framework illustrating the relationships between these variables and their impact on customer engagement.

Scope of the Research

This literature review synthesizes existing studies to develop a conceptual framework explaining the factors influencing customer engagement in the aesthetic industry. It examines how service fairness, service experience, brand experience, and perceived brand ethicality contribute to customer engagement. By analyzing the interrelationships among these variables, the study highlights the role of brand experience as a key mediator. The findings provide insights into how aesthetic service providers can enhance customer engagement through ethical practices and service quality. This research contributes to the literature by offering a structured understanding of customer engagement drivers in the aesthetic sector.

Literature Review as the Method

This study employs a literature review to analyze existing research on service fairness, service experience, brand experience, and perceived brand ethicality. It identifies key factors influencing customer engagement and develops a conceptual framework to enhance understanding within the aesthetic industry.

Customer Engagement

Consumer engagement is increasingly vital for aesthetic businesses in today’s competitive landscape (Bazi et al., 2023). Kumar and Pansari (2016) present a foundational model emphasizing emotional attachment and its long-term influence on customer behavior. This model identifies four key dimensions: Purchase Engagement, Referral Engagement, Influence Value Engagement, and Knowledge Engagement. These dimensions are particularly relevant in the aesthetic industry, where trust, satisfaction, and personalized experiences are essential. By leveraging these dimensions, aesthetic businesses can strengthen emotional connections with clients, fostering long-term relationships, loyalty, and advocacy.

Brand Experience

Brand experience encompasses the sensory, emotional, and cognitive interactions customers have with a brand, shaping their overall perception (Brakus et al., 2009). In the aesthetic industry, crafting memorable and personalized experiences is crucial, as clients seek more than just service—they desire transformative interactions (Xia et al., 2024). This aligns with service-dominant logic, where brand experience is co-created between businesses and clients, reflecting shared values and deeper connections (Keller, 2023). Positive brand experiences build emotional bonds, driving loyalty, advocacy, and engagement in brand activities such as social media interactions and loyalty programs (Giannopoulos et al., 2021).

Service Fairness

Service fairness is a critical component of customer satisfaction in the aesthetic industry, reflecting clients’ perceptions of justice in service interactions (Roy et al., 2018). It includes price fairness, procedural fairness, outcome fairness, and interactional fairness (Namkung & Jang, 2010). Research consistently highlights the strong link between perceived fairness and customer satisfaction, loyalty, and word-of-mouth referrals (Bernarto et al., 2024). When clients perceive fair pricing, transparent procedures, satisfactory outcomes, and respectful interactions, they are more likely to experience higher satisfaction, remain loyal, and recommend the service to others (Giovanis et al., 2015).

Service Experience

Service experiences form the foundation of customer interactions, encompassing emotional and social dimensions (Otto & Ritchie, 1996). In the aesthetic industry, service experiences extend beyond transactions to include peace of mind, key moments of truth, outcome focus, and product experience. Brands now prioritize creating reassuring environments, ensuring pivotal service encounters, and emphasizing positive results and product interactions (Pounders et al., 2015). This holistic approach acknowledges that every touchpoint, from initial expectations to post-service satisfaction, shapes the customer’s overall perception and emotional connection with the brand.

Perceive Brand Ethicality

Consumers’ perception of brand ethicality significantly influences purchase decisions, loyalty, and brand reputation, particularly in the aesthetic industry (Das et al., 2019). Ethicality encompasses sustainability, eco-friendly products, and ethical labor practices, with clients gravitating toward brands that demonstrate transparency and responsibility (Aldulaimi et al., 2024). Aesthetic brands that prioritize fair wages, ethically sourced ingredients, and responsible production earn consumer trust, while unethical practices such as greenwashing or misleading claims damage brand perception (Aldulaimi et al., 2024).

The relationships among the variables

Service fairness reflects customers’ perceptions of justice in brand interactions, including procedural, distributional, and interactional fairness (Tax, Brown, & Chandrashekar, 1998; Smith, Bolton, & Wagner, 1999). Research indicates a positive relationship between service fairness and brand experience, as fair treatment enhances satisfaction, trust, and loyalty (Kim, Shin, & Koo, 2018). Perceived fairness fosters stronger emotional connections and deeper brand engagement.

Service fairness also influences consumer engagement, which involves customers’ emotional, cognitive, and behavioral interactions with a brand (Dillette et al., 2020; Kumar & Pansari, 2016). Positive service fairness perceptions drive engagement, strengthening brand loyalty and business growth.

Service experience, encompassing emotional, cognitive, and sensory reactions to service interactions, plays a key role in shaping brand perceptions (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Shafiq et al., 2023). Similarly, brand experience represents the holistic perception of a brand’s values, personality, and communication (Brakus et al., 2009).

Perceived brand ethicality further influences consumer behavior, as customers assess a brand’s adherence to ethical principles such as fairness, honesty, and environmental responsibility (Brunk, 2012). Ethical brands cultivate loyalty and advocacy, particularly in a consumer landscape increasingly driven by social responsibility.

Brand experience mediates the relationship between service fairness, service experience, and perceived brand ethicality with customer engagement. Positive brand experiences reinforce ethical beliefs, build trust, and encourage active participation, while negative experiences create barriers to engagement. Klaus and Maklan (2012) suggest that service experience mediates the link between service offerings and consumer engagement. Positive emotions and trust fostered by efficient, personalized service enhance satisfaction, gratitude, and long-term loyalty. Conversely, negative experiences create frustration and disengagement, preventing meaningful customer-brand connections (Kotler et al., 2020). Ensuring positive service experiences eliminates these barriers, encouraging active participation and strengthening customer-brand relationships.

Research Result: a Model

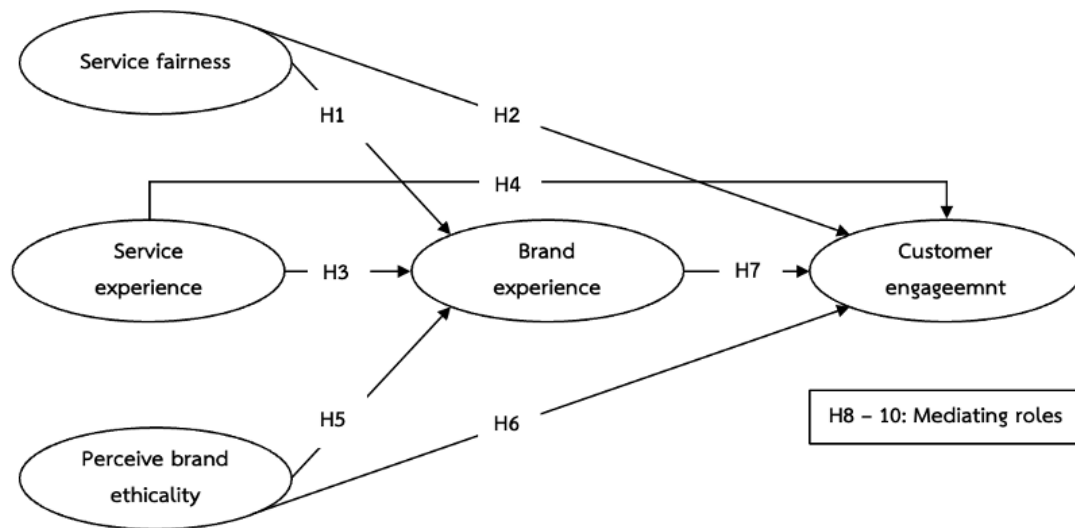


Figure 1: The Proposed Model

Figure 1 illustrates the research framework, integrating constructs to examine their influence on brand experience and customer engagement in Thailand's aesthetic sector, providing insights into consumer behavior.

At the core of the framework lies the relationship between service fairness, service experience, perceived brand ethicality, brand experience, and customer engagement. Service fairness includes four dimensions: outcome fairness, which relates to the perceived equity of results; procedural fairness, which involves the fairness of service delivery processes; price fairness, which addresses the reasonableness of pricing; and interactional fairness, which pertains to the quality of interpersonal treatment during service interactions. These dimensions collectively influence brand experience (H1) and customer engagement (H2). Service experience, another critical construct, is divided into peace of mind, moments of truth, outcome focus, and product experience. Peace of mind reflects the security and confidence customers feel, moments of truth are critical touchpoints where service quality is evaluated, outcome focus emphasizes achieving desired results, and product experience covers the perception of the service's features and usability. These elements contribute to shaping a positive brand experience (H3) and enhancing customer engagement (H4). Perceived brand ethicality, which involves judgments about a brand's adherence to ethical principles such as environmental sustainability and social responsibility, plays a significant role in the aesthetic sector. It influences brand experience (H5) and customer engagement (H6) by fostering consumer trust and loyalty. Brand experience, integrating sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual dimensions, mediates the effects of service fairness, service experience, and perceived brand ethicality on customer engagement (H7-H10). Sensory experience involves brand-related stimuli, affective experience pertains to emotions, behavioral experience covers actions prompted by brand interactions, and intellectual experience involves cognitive evaluations. Customer engagement, conceptualized through purchase engagement, referrals, influence value, and knowledge engagement, is the ultimate outcome of the framework. This framework highlights the interconnectedness of these constructs and their collective impact on enhancing customer engagement through brand experiences. By examining these relationships, the framework provides valuable insights for Thailand's aesthetic industry to design effective

marketing strategies that foster customer satisfaction, loyalty, and long-term success. The hypotheses for the framework are outlined accordingly.

H#1: Service fairness positively influences brand experience.

H#2: Service fairness positively influences customer engagement.

H#3: Service experience positively influences brand experience.

H#4: Service experience positively influences customer engagement.

H#5: Perceived brand ethicality positively influences brand experience.

H#6: Perceived brand ethicality positively influences customer engagement.

H#7: Brand experience positively influences customer engagement.

H#8: Brand experience mediates the relationship between service fairness and customer engagement.

H#9: Brand experience mediates the relationship between service experience and customer engagement.

H#10: Brand experience mediates the relationship between perceived brand ethicality and customer engagement.

Discussion and Recommendation

This framework provides aesthetic business owners with actionable strategies to enhance customer engagement by focusing on service fairness, service experience, perceived brand ethicality, and brand experience. Together, these elements create a cohesive brand experience that resonates with clients and fosters loyalty. **Service Fairness:** In the aesthetic sector, where clients often invest significantly in treatments, perceived fairness is critical. Business owners can enhance service fairness by implementing clear and transparent pricing, establishing consistent procedures, and training staff to deliver respectful and empathetic service. When clients feel fairly treated, their overall brand experience is positive, and they are more likely to trust the brand. **Service Experience:** This encompasses the quality of interactions clients have across touchpoints, from the ambiance of the facility to the professionalism of the staff. Business owners can elevate brand experience by providing a welcoming environment, utilizing high-quality products, and offering personalized treatments. For instance, customized skincare routines and detailed consultations can make clients feel valued and catered to, enhancing the sensory and emotional aspects of the brand experience. **Perceived Brand Ethicality:** Ethical considerations are increasingly important to aesthetic clients. Business owners can build a positive brand experience by incorporating sustainable practices, such as using eco-friendly products and cruelty-free procedures. Transparent communication about these ethical commitments strengthens the brand’s reputation and aligns it with the values of socially conscious clients. **Brand Experience as the Connector:** Brand experience is the holistic perception clients form based on their interactions with the brand. When service fairness, positive service experiences, and ethical practices are consistently delivered, they reinforce a cohesive brand experience that resonates emotionally with clients. This holistic brand experience not only enhances customer satisfaction but also fosters deeper engagement, making clients more likely to become loyal advocates. By adopting this framework, aesthetic business owners can create a compelling brand experience that integrates fairness, quality service, and ethical practices, driving customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, and sustainable business growth.

Conclusion

This study presents a comprehensive framework that explores the relationships between service fairness, service experience, perceived brand ethicality, brand experience, and customer engagement within the aesthetic industry. As consumer expectations continue to evolve, particularly in the beauty and wellness sectors, aesthetic businesses must prioritize these factors to remain competitive and build meaningful, long-term relationships with clients. The framework underscores the importance of service fairness, ensuring clients feel respected and valued, and of crafting positive service experiences that contribute to a memorable brand journey. Additionally, perceived brand ethicality plays a pivotal role in shaping customer perceptions, as clients increasingly seek out brands that align with their personal values on sustainability and social responsibility. Likewise, brand experience serves as the central connector in this model, acting as a mediator that translates fair treatment, exceptional service, and ethical practices into deeper customer engagement. By consistently delivering these elements, aesthetic businesses can foster stronger emotional connections, drive customer loyalty, and encourage brand advocacy. For practitioners, this framework provides actionable insights into designing and implementing customer-centric strategies that enhance both brand experience and customer engagement. Ultimately, by embracing these principles, aesthetic businesses can position themselves as leaders in a dynamic market, achieving sustained success and cultivating a loyal, satisfied client base.

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