

## ONLINE MARKETING SUCCESSFUL MODEL OF READY-TO-EAT FOOD ENTREPRENEURS IN THAILAND

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### Abstract

Many successful ready-to-eat food entrepreneurs in the online market Provide their customers with delicious food, new and affordable and speedy service Presently, due to the high competition caused by a large number of new entrepreneurs, those who lack knowledge of online marketing often struggle to succeed. Since marketing is constantly changing, businesses must be agile and develop their organization to stay competitive. This research aims to 1) examine the level of development of personal capabilities, digital marketing strategy, management innovation, organization agile and online marketing success of the ready-to-eat food entrepreneurs in Thailand, ; 2) explore the influence of the development of personal capabilities, digital marketing strategy, management innovation and organization agile towards online marketing success of the ready-to-eat food entrepreneurs in Thailand, ; and 3) develop the online marketing successful model of ready-to-eat food entrepreneurs in Thailand. The study employed a mixed research methodology consisting of quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative aspect involved a sample group was of 400 ready-to-eat food exporters, with the sample size determined based on the 20-time criteria of the observed variables through the multiple-stage sampling. Data collection was conducted through questionnaires, which were later analyzed using structural equation modeling. For the qualitative aspect, 20 ready-to-eat food entrepreneurs and experts in Thailand were interviewed in-depth as primary informants. The findings revealed that 1) the level of development of personal capabilities, digital marketing strategy, management innovation, organization agile, and online marketing success of the ready-to-eat food entrepreneurs in Thailand were all at a high level, ; 2) the development of personal capabilities, digital marketing strategy, management innovation and organization agile influenced online marketing success of the ready-to-eat food entrepreneurs in Thailand at a statistical significance level of .05, ; and 3) the online marketing successful model of ready-to-eat food entrepreneurs in Thailand, as developed by the researcher, was called the "PCOA Model" (Development of Personal Capabilities and Development of the Organization Agile for Successful Ready-to-Eat Food Products in Thailand). Based on the qualitative findings, it is crucially for ready-to-eat food entrepreneurs in Thailand to respond to changes in customer behaviors by continuously improving their packaging, taste, and variety of products in accordance with customer demands. These findings can serve as a valuable guideline for establishing effective business policies to enhance the online marketing success of such entrepreneurs in Thailand.

**Keyword:** Successful Model/Online Marketing/Ready-to-Eat/ Food/Thailand.

### INTRODUCTION

Currently, most businesses, both at the regional and global levels, increasingly adopt online marketing to respond to the rapid digital transformation occurring worldwide. This is an efficient approach within the flexible and adaptable marketing supply chain that aligns with the

changes in the global market (Valaei et al., 2019). It also considers consumer behavior at both individual and organizational levels in the consumption of high-quality products. Therefore, incorporating innovation into the production process to enhance efficiency and meet customer expectations has become more prevalent. The search for success factors in online commerce has gained significance, given the consumer's level of expectation for quality products. Thus, online businesses are prioritizing the integration of innovative approaches into their strategies (Sharma & Aggarwal, 2019).

The effectiveness of online marketing depends on the significance of consumer internet access, including the popularity of using online social media (Valaei et al., 2019). Businesses can create websites to showcase products and services in an electronic commerce format or establish trading platforms to provide customers with the easiest and most convenient access. Communication must be two-way, responses should be prompt, and storytelling should be interesting, fresh, and different from numerous competitors in the online business world (Sharma & Aggarwal, 2019). Creating applications to enhance customer access has also become a trend (Valaei et al., 2019). Utilizing technology in online commerce aligns with consumer behavior and lifestyle, offering convenience and global accessibility. As a result, many businesses have incorporated online marketing to enhance business operations. Various products and services are available online, including travel and tourism services (Sharma & Aggarwal, 2019), fashion and beauty products, electronic devices, furniture and household items, food and personal care products (Valaei et al., 2019), as well as toys and recreational items. Each category has numerous competitors, emphasizing the importance of creating distinctiveness for products and services to gain acceptance from customers (Sharma & Aggarwal, 2019; Valaei et al., 2019).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Human Resource Potential

Businesses have human resources for operations and driving towards success (Burhan et al., 2020). The power of knowledge, ability, professional skills and experience will give businesses a competitive advantage in the market, especially in the ready-to-eat food business that uses online marketing to reach customer needs (Chou et al., 2021; Kerdpitak et al., 2022).

Human resources in the organization are responsible for preparing food that is tasty and popular with customers and marketing online effectively to meet customer needs and create satisfaction and loyalty to the business (Wang et al., 2020; Dsouza & Sharma, 2021). Human resource potential is the competency of employees in food stores that is linked to consumer motivation to choose food according to attitude and consumption towards buying food from online trade (Chou et al., 2021; Dsouza & Sharma, 2021).

The success in responding to customers in every dimension comes from knowledge, ability, skills and professionalism of human resources in food establishments that create customer recognition and loyalty to the business (Burhan et al., 2020; Chou et al., 2021).

## **Digital Marketing Strategy**

Digital marketing strategy is marketing in an online system that can quickly and conveniently reach the needs of customers in each target group by creating their own brand, making it easy for customers to remember (Yusuf et al., 2018). In addition, when customers have confidence, it will make them very loyal to the brand. Digital marketing strategy will involve customers in creating content and marketing activities.

Entrepreneurs can use customer-generated marketing content to effectively respond to customers and create customer and market satisfactions (Confetto et al., 2020; Yusuf et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2020). Digital marketing strategy is a marketing tool that entrepreneurs can effectively use in the ready-to-eat food business. Building credibility and confidence as well as responding to customer opinions towards products and services appearing in the online market result in increased customer brand loyalty (Jose, 2018). Brand trustworthiness and product popularity arise from online reputation and online word-of-mouth communication. Furthermore, using influencer marketing makes businesses more likely to receive feedback from customers (Dewi et al., 2020; Bag et al., 2021).

Digital marketing strategy is a tool that can create success through mobile phones by using applications and platforms to reach customer needs. It can create ease, convenience, and speed, making customers satisfied and creating brand loyalty. In consumer consumption, customers search for information about products and services on social media. If a business is famous for its products and has award, its product popularity will increase. Online reputation of the business results in customer acceptance, leading to purchasing decisions and repeat purchases with loyalty to products and businesses (Yan et al., 2022; Alonso-Garcia et al., 2022)

## **Management Innovation**

To gain market competitiveness of the ready-to-eat food business, entrepreneurs use new methods and ideas, which are innovative management practices, to produce high-quality products that meet customer expectations (Yusuf et al., 2018). In addition, creative methods are used in business processes to respond to customers more efficiently. Innovation in the service of ready-to-eat food products satisfies customers. Confidence towards the business leads to more customer acceptance.

Management innovation is the use of new methods and new things in the product production process to make high quality products according to customer needs (Yan et al., 2022). Businesses gain a competitive advantage from customer popularity (Ko et al., 2018). Management innovation is an important method in the process of developing the business to have the ability to respond to the market from the management process of an efficient business in both product production process and customer service impressively (Akenroye et al., 2020).

It is the ability of a business to operate both producing products and providing services with the goal of creating customer satisfaction, repurchase, including online and offline referrals (Papa et al., 2022). It is dynamic and powerful capability which results in higher performance (Gu et al., 2021; Olazo, 2022).

## **Organizational Agility**

In operating a ready-to-eat food product business to have sustainable marketability and organizational efficiency, organizational agility is important. It makes the business flexible and quick to detect changes in market trends and customer needs (Yan et al., 2022). It helps business entrepreneurs make decisions on changing business processes or strategies quick and timely, leading to timely responses to customers (Gu et al., 2021). These affect the overall success of the ready-to-eat food business. The organizational agility is the flexibility of the food business organization in adapting to respond to customers in a timely manner from market changes, allowing customers to be served with quality food products as expected (Papa et al., 2022). It has a great influence on efficiency of food-producing businesses. It is the organization's ability to adapt to market changes and be able to detect market demand trends in order to find a way to respond quickly (Çağlar Kalkan & Aydın, 2020). Entrepreneurs can make decisions about these changes and quickly tailor the services their customers expect, resulting in market power and competitive advantage. The quick responsiveness makes business organizations more effective in overcoming market crises (Garrido-Vega et al. 2021; Hutahayan, 2019).

## **Online Marketing Success of the Ready-To-Eat Food Entrepreneurs in Thailand**

Success of the online market arises from customer confidence that results in business loyalty and higher business performance. The customer engagement results in a lot of online activity and increased online sales from using an online food ordering platform (Chakraborty, 2019; Kaur et al., 2021; Gómez-Rico et al., 2022). Branding of food establishments creates visual value that effectively affects customers' purchase intentions from food delivery applications. Online marketing influencers can build trust in products and businesses in consumer purchasing decisions, making the business have more sales. Online businesses will be successful and be able to compete effectively in the market, if they have organizational agility as an important part of making an organization flexible and adaptable in every changing situation (Gómez-Rico et al., 2022). Flexibility in detecting information through two-way communication can be used to make decisions to adjust business policies in order to effectively respond to customers' needs. It affects satisfaction that leads to customer loyalty (Garrido-Vega et al., 2021).

Adjusting the competitive market environment from customer response makes customers loyal to the product and business. It is considered business success from customer acceptance and confidence (Garrido-Vega et al., 2021; Gómez-Rico et al., 2022).

From the literature review above, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: Human resource potential has a direct influence on digital marketing strategy.
- H2: Human resource potential has a direct influence on organizational agility.
- H3: Human resource potential has a direct influence on management innovation.
- H4: Digital marketing strategy has a direct influence on organizational agility.
- H5: Management innovation has a direct influence on organizational agility.

- H6: Digital marketing strategy has a direct influence on online marketing success of ready-to-eat food entrepreneurs in Thailand.
- H7: Organizational agility has a direct influence on online marketing success of ready-to-eat food entrepreneurs in Thailand.
- H8: Management innovation has a direct influence on online marketing success of ready-to-eat food entrepreneurs in Thailand.

## METHODOLOGY

The mixed methods research, with Embedded Design (Cresswell, 2003), was conducted by integrating quantitative and qualitative research methods. The population consists of entrepreneurs in the ready-to-eat food product category in Thailand, totaling 35,375 individuals (Department of Business Development, Ministry of Commerce, 2022). The quantitative research sample was obtained by estimating the size of 20 times greater than the number of observed variables. In this research, there were 20 observed variables, so the researchers determined a sample size of 400 ready-to-eat food entrepreneurs in Thailand using a multi-stage sampling approach from. The study primarily began with quantitative research, involving a literature review and analysis of documents and research works related to variables influencing online marketing success of ready-to-eat food entrepreneurs in Thailand. These variables included human resource potential, digital marketing strategy, organizational agility, and management innovation.

Data was synthesized and summarized into specific research definitions. Measurement indicators for variables were defined within the research conceptual framework. Subsequently, these indicators were used to develop a questionnaire based on a 5-level Likert Rating Scale. Prior to data collection, the validity and reliability of the measurement tools were tested. The collected data were then subjected to statistical analysis using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique.

For qualitative research, the researchers employed in-depth interview methods with 10 ready-to-eat food entrepreneurs in Thailand and 10 ready-to-eat food experts in Thailand, totaling 20 key informants.

Purposive sampling was used. The qualitative data was then organized, categorized, analyzed, interpreted, connected, concluded to enable detailed and reasoned explanations in the quantitative analysis.

## RESULTS

The normal distribution of the 21 observed variables studied in the structural equation model was examined, using the chi-square test ( $\chi^2$ ). The statistical significance at the .05 level represented non-normally distribution of such variables. On the other hand, if it was found to be not statistically significant (P-value > .50), it revealed normal distribution of such variables, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics Observed Variables (n=400)**

Variable	M	S.D.	%CV	Sk	Ku	$\chi^2$	P-value
HKDM	4.20	.73	17.38	-2.831	-1.062	9.140	.010
PRFD	4.31	.72	16.71	-3.792	-1.848	17.794	.000
SCNF	4.26	.71	16.67	-3.308	-1.626	13.589	.001
SCMK	4.15	.82	19.76	-3.120	-2.032	13.863	.001
CRTG	4.12	.82	19.90	-3.045	-1.962	13.117	.001
CYOB	4.08	.84	20.59	-3.026	-2.106	13.590	.001
LCGC	4.17	.83	19.90	-3.529	-2.205	17.316	.000
RCFB	4.14	.75	18.12	-2.878	-1.486	1.492	.005
BLYB	4.21	.77	18.29	-3.575	-2.192	17.582	.000
MKOL	4.20	.79	18.81	-3.376	-1.862	14.867	.001
PDTI	4.16	.78	18.75	-3.002	-1.591	11.545	.003
PRCI	4.23	.71	16.78	-2.893	-1.047	9.466	.009
SRVI	4.32	.67	15.51	-3.583	-2.116	17.320	.000
DMDT	4.25	.72	16.94	-3.189	-1.572	12.637	.002
FBDC	4.35	.68	15.63	-3.978	-2.182	2.583	.000
AGRP	4.46	.65	14.57	-5.196	-1.943	3.771	.000
POPT	4.29	.67	15.62	-3.028	-1.537	11.533	.003
CONF	4.28	.69	16.12	-3.543	-2.354	18.092	.000
CSTL	4.43	.63	14.22	-4.388	-2.643	26.242	.000
ICTN	4.30	.73	16.98	-3.875	-2.219	19.940	.000

Note: chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) with statistical significance (P-value <.05) indicates a non-normal distribution

The researchers have checked the quality of the variables studied in the model by testing construct validity of each latent variable using the Confirm Factor Analysis technique by considering the greater than .30 factor loadings to confirm a good observed variable. It is considered from the  $R^2$  to check reliability of the empirical variables as well as directly examining the Construct Reliability ( $\rho_c > .60$ ) of the latent variables and Average Variable Extracted,  $\rho_v > 0.50$ ) (Diamantopoulos and Siguaw, 2000), as detailed as follows.

**Table 2: Factor Loadings (n = 400)**

Variables	Factor Loading ( $\lambda$ )	Error ( $\theta$ )	t	R <sup>2</sup>
Human resource potential (HRPT)				
Human knowledge and skills in digital marketing (HKDM)	.77	.41	15.60	.59
Professionalism in food (PRFD)	.74	.45	15.06	.55
Skills in creating new food (SCNF)	.73	.46	14.86	.54
Digital marketing strategy (DIGST)				
Social media marketing (SCMK)	.69	.52	15.07	.48
Communication reaching target customers (CRTG)	.75	.44	16.69	.56
Creating your own brand (CYOB)	.76	.42	17.17	.58
Leveraging content generated by customers (LCGC)	.81	.35	18.78	.65
Responding to customer feedback (RCFB)	.79	.38	18.19	.62
Building loyalty of brand (BLYB)	.68	.53	14.86	.47
Marketing through online reputation (MKOL)	.74	.46	16.30	.54

Management innovation (MGINO)					
	Product innovation (PDTI)	.63	.61	12.27	.39
	Process innovation (PRCI)	.78	.39	15.04	.61
	Service innovation (SRVI)	.77	.40	14.97	.60
Organizational agility (OAGI)					
	Dexterous/mobility detection (DMDT)	.55	.40	10.30	.60
	Flexible decision (FBDC)	.74	.45	13.18	.55
	Agile response (AGRP)	.78	.39	13.69	.61
Online marketing success (ONMSC)					
	Product popularity (POPT)	.68	.54	13.78	.46
	Continuous confidence in product (CONF)	.84	.29	16.56	.71
	Customer loyalty (CSTL)	.70	.51	14.21	.49
	Increased turnover (ICTN)	.70	.52	12.72	.48
		$\rho_c = .82$	$\rho_v = .54$		
Chi-Square=0.11, df=1, P-value=0.74151, RMSEA=0.000					

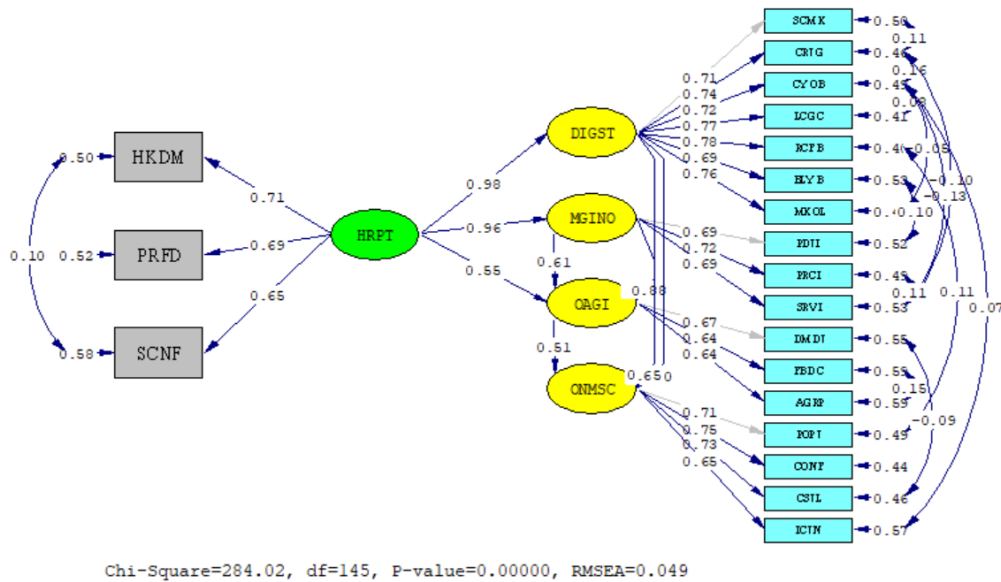
**Table 3: Direct Effect, Indirect Effect, and Total Effect (n=400)**

Dependent variables	R <sup>2</sup>	Effects	Independent variables			
			Digital marketing strategy (DIGST)	Management innovation (MGINO)	Organizational agility (OAGI)	Human resource potential (HRPT)
Digital marketing strategy (DIGST)	.96	DE	-	-	-	.98*(15.17)
		IE	-	-	-	-
		TE	-	-	-	.98*(15.17)
Management innovation (MGINO)	.92	DE	-	-	-	.96*(14.73)
		IE	-	-	-	-
		TE	-	-	-	.96*(14.73)
Organizational agility (OAGI)	.93	DE	.88*(11.11)	.61*(7.35)	-	.55*(8.83)
		IE	-	-	-	.41*(9.32)
		TE	.88*(11.11)	.61*(7.35)	-	.96*(13.46)
Online marketing success (ONMSC)	.96	DE	.60*(8.40)	.65*(8.21)	.51*(8.17)	-
		IE	.29*(6.64)	.27*(6.91)	-	.81*(12.34)
		TE	.89*(11.28)	.92*(9.71)	.51*(8.17)	.81*(12.34)

$\chi^2 = 284.02$  df = 145 p-value = .00000,  $\chi^2 / df = 1.95$ , RMSEA = .049, RMR = .022, SRMR = .041, CFI = .99, GFI = .93, AGFI = .90, CN = 262.85

\*statistical significance at the .05 level

Note: In parentheses, they were the t-value. If the value was not between -1.96 and 1.96, it was statistically significant at the .05 level. DE=Direct Effect, IE=Indirect Effect, TE=Total Effect



**Figure 1: Adjusted Structural Equation Model (n=400)**

The results of the data analysis indicated that the model was fit with the observational data by allowing the variance of standard errors ( $\theta$ ) of the 17 pairs of observed variables to have a relationship, with degrees of freedom (df) before adjustment being 162 and df after adjustment being 145, it was found that the adjusted model fitted well with the observational data. This conclusion was based on fit indices as follows:  $\chi^2 = 284.02$  df = 145 p-value = .00000,  $\chi^2 / df = 1.95$ , RMSEA = .049, RMR = .022, SRMR = .041, CFI = .99, GFI = .93, AGFI = .90, CN = 262.85

The results of the goodness-of-fit index revealed that  $\chi^2 = 284.02$  df = 145 p-value = .00000, not meeting the statistical significance criterion (P-value > .05). However, the  $\chi^2$  was sensitive to sample size. The  $\chi^2/df$  of  $1.81 < 2.00$  within an acceptable range was considered. Other acceptable fit indices are as follows: RMSEA = .049 < .05, RMR = .022 < .05, SRMR = .041 < .05, CFI = .99 > .90, GFI = .93 > .90, AGFI = .9 = .90, and CN = 262.85 > 200.00). Based on these goodness-of-fit indices, it concluded that the adjusted structural equation model fitted well with the observational data. The parameter estimates in the model were considered acceptable.

## CONCLUSIONS

The results found that the adjusted structural equation model of influences of human resource potential, digital marketing strategy, management innovation and organizational agility on online marketing success of ready-to-eat food entrepreneurs in Thailand was fit with the empirical data at an acceptable level, which was considered from the fit Indexes as follows:  $\chi^2 = 284.02$  df = 145 p-value = .00000,  $\chi^2 / df = 1.95$ , RMSEA = .049, RMR = .022, SRMR = .041, CFI = .99, GFI = .93, AGFI = .90, CN = 262.85



The estimation was found in the structural equation model as follows.

- 1) Human Resource Potential (HRPT) has a direct influence on Digital Marketing Strategy (DIGST) with a coefficient of  $.98^*(15.17)$  and a statistical significance at the .05 level, supporting H1: human resource potential has a direct influence on digital marketing strategy.
- 2) Human Resource Potential (HRPT) has a direct influence on Organizational Agility (OAGI) with a coefficient of  $.55^*(8.83)$  and a statistical significance at the .05 level, supporting H2: human resource potential has a direct influence on organizational agility.
- 3) Human Resource Potential (HRPT) has a direct influence on Management Innovation (MGINO) with a coefficient of  $.96^*(14.73)$  and a statistical significance at the .05 level, supporting H3: human resource potential has a direct influence on management innovation.
- 4) Management Innovation (MGINO) has a direct influence on Organizational Agility (OAGI) with a coefficient of  $.61^*(7.35)$ , which is statistically significant at the .05 level, supporting H5: management innovation has a direct influence on organizational agility.
- 5) Digital Marketing Strategy (DIGST) has a direct influence on Online Market Success (ONMSC) for Entrepreneurs in the Ready-to-Eat Food Category in Thailand, with a coefficient of  $.60^*(8.40)$ , which is statistically significant at the .05 level, supporting H6: Digital marketing strategy has a direct influence on the online marketing success of ready-to-eat food entrepreneurs in Thailand.
- 6) Organizational Agility (OAGI) has a direct influence on Online Market Success (ONMSC) for Entrepreneurs in the Ready-to-Eat Food Category in Thailand, with a coefficient of  $.51^*(8.17)$ , which is statistically significant at the .05 level, supporting H7: Organizational agility has a direct influence on the online marketing success of ready-to-eat food entrepreneurs in Thailand.
- 7) Management Innovation (MGINO) has a direct influence on Online Market Success (ONMSC) for Entrepreneurs in the Ready-to-Eat Food Category in Thailand, with a coefficient of  $.65^*(8.21)$ , which is statistically significant at the .05 level, supporting H8: management innovation has a direct influence on online marketing success of ready-to-eat food entrepreneurs in Thailand.
- 8) Digital Marketing Strategy (DIGST), Management Innovation (MGINO), and Organizational Agility (OAGI) together can predict Online Market Success (ONMSC) with 96%.
- 9) Digital Marketing Strategy (DIGST), Management Innovation (MGINO), and Human Resource Potential (HRPT) together can predict Organizational Agility (OAGI) by 93%.
- 10) Human Resource Potential (HRPT) can predict Management Innovation (MGINO) by 92%.
- 11) Human Resource Potential (HRPT) can predict Digital Marketing Strategy (DIGST) by 96%.

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