

FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN THE INTERNATIONAL PERSONAL BELONGINGS RELOCATION SERVICE BUSINESS IN THE BANGKOK METROPOLITAN REGION

PICHADA RAJAVECHPISAL¹, YANANDA SRIAPHATTHADA²,
BUNDIT PUNGNIRUND³, TANAPOL KORTANA⁴ and SIAM RAMASOOT⁵

^{1,2,3,4,5}Lecturer, PhD Program, College of Innovation and Management, Suan Sunadha Rajabhat University, Thailand. Email: ¹s63484945003@ssru.ac.th, ²yananda.si@ssru.ac.th, ³bundit.pu@ssru.ac.th, ⁴tanapol.ko@ssru.ac.th, ⁵ceo@keptpay.com

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the significance of service innovation, service quality, perceived value, and customer trust in fostering customer loyalty within the international personal belongings moving service industry in Bangkok and its surrounding areas. A particular focus is placed on the S2PC2 Model, which emphasizes Customer Trust as a crucial factor. The objectives include assessing the relative importance of these factors and exploring their influence on customer loyalty. The population for this study consists of customers who have utilized international personal belongings moving services in Bangkok and its vicinity. A sample of 360 respondents was selected through a stratified random sampling method to ensure representation across various demographics, including gender, age, education level, and occupation. Data were collected using structured questionnaires distributed to the selected sample. The findings indicate that service innovation and quality, alongside perceived value and customer trust, play critical roles in enhancing customer loyalty. Furthermore, a practical model for customer loyalty in this sector is proposed, emphasizing actionable strategies that service providers can implement to improve customer satisfaction and retention. This research contributes to the understanding of customer loyalty dynamics in the moving service industry and offers valuable insights for practitioners seeking to optimize their service delivery and foster lasting customer relationships.

Keywords: Leadership Style, Generation Cohort, Innovation Capability, Strategic Management Process.

1. INTRODUCTION

Starting from 1960, under the leadership of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, the government aimed to support the private sector in playing a significant role in investment and industrial management. Consequently, it enacted the Investment Promotion Act, known as the “Investment Promotion Act for Industrial Enterprises B.E. 2508 (1965)” (Board of Investment [BOI], 2023). Subsequently, the Office of the Board of Investment (BOI) was established in 1966, tasked with promoting both domestic investment and Thai investments abroad (Jirawuth, 2020). Since then, international investment expansion has occurred continuously (Sakthivel, 2021). The BOI has a primary policy to support multinational companies in Thailand, Thai companies, and/or transnational organizations to invest in Thailand as much as possible (Puttaswamy & Kumar, 2022). Therefore, there is a need to bring in shareholders, representatives of organizations, and experts to hold positions in Thailand.

In addition to the companies promoted by the BOI, there are also private businesses with joint investments from other countries, branch expansions, financial and banking businesses,

embassies, schools, universities, educational units, and all organizations that require foreign personnel to be stationed in Thailand (Thang, 2019). All have a high demand for capable personnel that match the job positions they seek to fill. Convincing skilled individuals to accept long-term work contracts and relocate their families to work in Thailand involves several factors (Chalermisan, 2018). Beyond the required qualifications set by the company or organization, candidates must also meet standards established by the Ministry of Labor and/or the Board of Investment (BOI).

In the international freight forwarding business, especially in personal belongings moving services, customer trust plays a crucial role in brand loyalty, which is a key factor affecting business success (Islam et al., 2021). Building this trust can stem from customers' past experiences and their expectations of future service (Fared et al., 2021).

Incorporating service innovations alongside service quality can significantly enhance the customer experience. Innovations such as real-time shipment tracking, customizable packaging, and professional customer service are effective ways businesses can foster customer loyalty (Lee et al., 2022). In a highly competitive environment, like Bangkok—which serves as a hub for foreign investment and the growth of expatriate communities—understanding the drivers of customer loyalty becomes essential (Budur & Poturak, 2021).

Service quality in this sector is influenced by both tangible factors, such as the condition of the goods and the professionalism of the moving crew, as well as intangible factors like empathy, assurance, and responsiveness to customer needs (Özkan et al., 2020). The combination of tangible and intangible service quality components has a significant impact on customer satisfaction.

Moreover, the value customers perceive from the services they receive also plays a vital role in loyalty. This perception is especially relevant in terms of pricing, reliability, and the overall customer experience (Nguyen et al., 2021). Emphasizing the role of perceived value in influencing customer loyalty is equally important.

However, the integration of technology into these services brings challenges, such as concerns regarding privacy and data security (Ricardianto et al., 2023). Customers must share personal information and may have virtual access to their homes, making it essential to ensure that this information is protected. Businesses in personal belongings relocation services need to invest in employee training, infrastructure improvements, and innovation to maintain competitiveness in the market. Another significant trend shaping the industry is the increasing demand for personalized services. Today's customers seek not just services but also meaningful experiences (Endwia et al., 2021). Therefore, personal belongings moving services must offer tailored solutions, cultural training, and post-move support to help customers adjust to their new communities. These value-added services not only create customer satisfaction but also foster loyalty. Understanding the factors influencing customer loyalty in the international personal belongings relocation service business is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, this industry plays a significant role in facilitating the relocation of individuals and families across borders, often involving the transport of valuable and cherished possessions. As such, customer

loyalty is vital for service providers to maintain a stable client base and ensure long-term success.

In the competitive landscape of the Bangkok metropolitan region, where numerous companies offer similar services, identifying and enhancing the elements that foster customer loyalty can provide a critical competitive advantage. Factors such as service quality, innovation, perceived value, and customer trust are fundamental in shaping customer experiences and influencing their decision to remain loyal to a specific service provider. Furthermore, as customer expectations evolve, businesses must adapt their strategies to meet these demands effectively. This research aims to provide insights into how service providers can leverage these factors to build stronger relationships with clients, enhance satisfaction, and ultimately drive repeat business. By understanding the dynamics of customer loyalty, companies can implement targeted strategies that not only attract new clients but also retain existing ones, leading to sustainable growth in the international relocation sector.

In summary, this study addresses a significant gap in the literature regarding customer loyalty in the international personal belongings relocation service industry, particularly in the context of Bangkok. The findings can serve as a valuable resource for practitioners aiming to optimize their services and foster lasting customer relationships in an increasingly competitive market. Ultimately, trust is a vital factor in building customer loyalty, reflecting confidence in the reliability and honesty of service providers (Islam et al., 2021). This trust is often based on past experiences and future interaction expectations. Understanding the importance of trust enables businesses in this sector to retain existing customers and attract new ones more effectively.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. Study the level of importance of service innovation, service quality, perceived value, and customer confidence, and customer loyalty in the international personal belongings moving service business in Bangkok and its vicinity.
2. Study the influence of service innovation, service quality, perceived value, and customer confidence on customer loyalty in the international personal belongings moving service business in Bangkok and its vicinity.
3. Develop a model of customer loyalty in the international personal belongings moving business in Bangkok and its vicinity that can be implemented in practice.

3. METHODOLOGY

Population and Sample Scope

The study population comprises 156,596 senior executives and their families who have relocated from abroad (International Relocation) to work in Thailand for one year or more (Immigration Bureau, 2023), along with 1,280 diplomats and their families residing at 80 embassies in Bangkok (Department of Protocol, 2023) who have utilized international personal belongings transportation services.

For the quantitative sample, a multi-stage random sampling method was employed, with specific criteria established for sample selection. The determination of sample size was based on the estimation from observed variables (Observation Variables), adhering to a ratio of 1:20. In this research, there are 18 observed variables, leading to the conclusion that a sample size of 360 individuals is appropriate, as it is 20 times the number of variables being studied (Grance, J.B., 2008). The sample group was selected through a multi-stage process within the Bangkok area.

The qualitative sample was gathered through in-depth interviews with 10 executives from international personal belongings moving service businesses, along with 10 experts in the field, totaling 20 participants. This sample group was selected using the snowball sampling method, and the data were analyzed using content analysis techniques (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2015).

Variable Scope

This study encompasses five latent variables, each comprising the following observable variables:

External Latent Variables: Service Quality

Observable variables include: Trustworthiness, Quality Assurance, Visibility, Customer Care, Speed of Response.

The model incorporates several internal latent variables that reflect key aspects of service quality and customer perception. The first latent variable is Service Innovation, which is measured by four observable variables: New Service Concepts, New Service Coordination, New Service Delivery Systems, and Technology Options. The second latent variable is Value Perception, encompassing three observable variables: Emotional Value, Social Value, and Functional Value. Additionally, Customer Trust is another critical latent variable, comprising three observable variables: Competence, Reliability, and Honesty. Lastly, Customer Loyalty is represented by five observable variables: Trustworthiness, Quality Assurance, Visibility, Customer Care, and Speed of Response. These variables collectively contribute to understanding customer experiences and behaviors within the service context.

Content Scope

This study explores the theoretical concepts surrounding service innovation, service quality, value perception, customer trust, and customer loyalty

Time Scope

The research will be conducted from January 2024 to September 2024.

Area Scope

The study focuses exclusively on personal belongings international moving service businesses located in Bangkok and its surrounding areas

4. RESULT

In the research titled “Factors Influencing Customer Loyalty in the International Personal Belongings Relocation Service Business in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region,” the researcher collected and analyzed data using statistical methods in the form of structural equation modeling. This approach aimed to uncover the causal relationships among the variables. The researcher conducted a thorough literature review to identify and extract the relevance of each variable, which subsequently informed the development of a conceptual framework for the initial study.

Following this, statistical hypotheses were tested to create the most suitable model. The researcher then examined the relationship patterns and the weights of influence between each pair of variables. These variables included service quality, service innovation, perceived value, customer trust, and customer loyalty within the context of the international personal goods moving service business studied in Bangkok and its surrounding areas.

Presentation of Demographic Data of Respondents

In this research, the demographic characteristics of the respondents were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency distribution, mean, percentage, and standard deviation. The presentation of research results is divided into two parts: the analysis of demographic data based on the general information of the respondents and the assessment of the respondents' opinions on each variable. This latter analysis was used to inform the structural equation model for the research.

The demographic data were gathered through six questions regarding the respondents' gender, age, education level, occupation, average income, and the frequency of using international personal belongings moving services. The analysis results are presented in Tables 4.4 to 4.9 as follows:

The survey results revealed a gender distribution where the majority of respondents were male, comprising 215 individuals (59.72%), while female respondents totaled 145 (40.28%). In terms of age, the largest group consisted of respondents aged 46-50 years, with 112 individuals (31.11%), followed by those aged 41-45 (87 individuals, 24.17%), 36-40 (43 individuals, 11.94%), 26-30 (41 individuals, 11.39%), 31-35 (36 individuals, 10.00%), and 20-25 (7 individuals, 1.94%). Regarding education, a significant portion of respondents held a bachelor's degree (312 individuals, 86.67%), while 43 (11.94%) had a master's degree and 5 (1.39%) held a doctoral degree. Most respondents were employees of international organizations or embassies, accounting for 210 individuals (58.33%), with others working for international private companies (91 individuals, 25.28%), as officers caring for foreigners in Thailand (31 individuals, 8.61%), househusbands/housewives (13 individuals, 3.61%), business owners/freelancers (11 individuals, 3.06%), and in other occupations (4 individuals, 1.11%). Concerning income, the majority reported earning between 200,000 and 499,999 baht per month (195 individuals, 54.17%), followed by 500,000-799,999 baht (147 individuals, 40.83%), 2,000,000 baht or more (13 individuals, 3.61%), and 800,000-1,999,999 baht (5 individuals, 1.39%). Lastly, in terms of service usage frequency, most respondents had utilized

international personal belongings moving services nine or more times (145 individuals, 40.28%), followed by 6-8 times (133 individuals, 36.94%), 2-5 times (79 individuals, 21.94%), and less than twice per year (3 individuals, 0.83%).

Table 1: Symbol of Research

Symbols and Notations	Variable Meaning
Latent Variables	
SQ	Service Quality
SI	Service Innovation
PV	Perceived Value
CT	Customer Trust
CR	Customer Loyalty
Observable Variables	
sq1	Trustworthiness
sq2	Quality Assurance
sq3	Clear Visibility
sq4	Customer Care
sq5	Speed of Response
si1	New Service Concepts
si2	New Service Coordination
si3	New Service Delivery Systems
si4	Technology Options
pv1	Emotional Value
pv2	Social Value
pv3	Functional Value
ct1	Competence
ct2	Reliability
ct3	Honesty
cr1	Perceptual Dimension
cr2	Attitudinal Dimension
cr3	Behavioral Dimension

Analysis of the Adjusted Structural Equation Model

Following the adjustments and development of the structural equation model (Adjusted Model) based on the hypotheses, the researcher ensured its alignment with empirical data. This was achieved by allowing the variance of the standard errors (θ) of some observable variables to correlate, as recommended by the Modification Indices provided by the statistical analysis software. The results indicated that the adjusted structural equation model fits the empirical data at an acceptable level, as evidenced by the fit indices presented: $\chi^2 = 235.109$, $df = 104$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$, $\chi^2 / df = 2.261$, $GFI = 0.929$, $NFI = 0.947$, $IFI = 0.970$, $CFI = 0.970$, $RMR = 0.044$, and $RMSEA = 0.059$. All fit statistics met the assessment criteria, leading to the conclusion that the adjusted structural equation model is consistent with the empirical data (Model Fit). It is worth noting that while the p-value remains low, it is essential to consider that the p-value is calculated using the chi-square statistic, which is a non-parametric statistic highly sensitive to sample size. Therefore, other harmony indices are prioritized for evaluation. This sensitivity underscores that the parameter estimates in the adjusted structural equation model

are sufficiently reliable for practical application. The researcher has presented the analysis results in Figure 4.5 and provided detailed comparisons of the statistics against established benchmark values in Table.

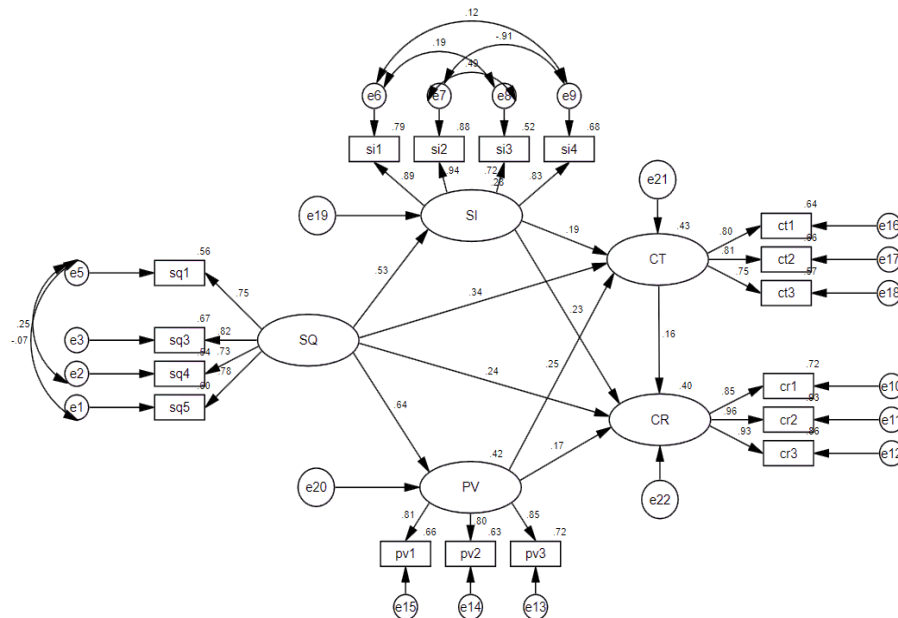


Figure 1: The results of the structural equation model analysis (Adjusted Model) and are consistent with the empirical data presented as standardized solutions.

Table 1: Fit Indices for the Structural Equation Model

Criteria	Specified Fit Index (Reference)	Model Statistics	Evaluation
χ^2	p-value < .05 (Bollen, 1989)	$\chi^2 = 235.109$, df = 104, p-value = .000*	Not acceptable
Relative χ^2 (χ^2/df)	< 5.00 (Bollen, 1989; Kline, 2016)	2.261	Acceptable
RMSEA	< .08 (Hair et al., 1998)	0.059	Acceptable
RMR	< .08 (Hair et al., 2006)	0.055	Acceptable
GFI	> .90 (Kelloway, 2015)	0.929	Not acceptable
NFI	> .90 (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000)	0.947	Not acceptable
IFI	> .90 (Tanaka, 1993)	0.970	Acceptable
CFI	> .90 (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000)	0.970	Acceptable

Table 1, it is evident that the fit indices of the adjusted structural equation model are consistent with empirical data. Therefore, it can be concluded that the adjusted model demonstrates adequate fit, and the parameter estimates derived from the model are acceptable, as summarized in Table. The Factor Loadings of all observed variables meet the criteria, the model fit indices indicate that the model does not yet align with the empirical data. The researcher made adjustments and developed the structural equation model according to the hypothesis (Modification Model) to enhance its compatibility with the empirical data by allowing the

variances of the standard errors (θ) of certain observed variables to correlate, while considering the appropriateness and feasibility in terms of concepts and theories, as well as related research that has been previously studied, including the suitability and viability in discussing the research findings after modifying the model.

After establishing the correlation between each pair of error terms and reanalyzing, the researcher found that the observed variable sq2 had a Factor Loading lower than the threshold. The researcher then removed this variable and proceeded to adjust and develop the structural equation model according to the hypothesis (Modification Model) to ensure compatibility with the empirical data and conducted another analysis. The results of the analysis to check the alignment of the hypothesis structural equation model with the empirical data, using statistical software, indicated that the hypothesis model was consistent with the empirical data.

Once the adjusted model (Adjust Model) aligned with the empirical data, there were some observations regarding the low p-value; however, since the p-value is calculated using chi-square statistics, which are non-parametric and highly sensitive to sample size, other model fit indices were considered instead. Therefore, it was possible to utilize the parameter estimation of various influence coefficients of the studied variables to explain the relationship paths of the structural equation model moving forward. The details of the adjustments made to the hypothesis structural model are presented in the following section.

Analysis of the Adjusted Structural Equation Model

It can be concluded that the developed structural equation model demonstrates the influence of the factors: service quality, service innovation, perceived value, customer trust, and customer loyalty in the international personal goods moving service business in Bangkok and its vicinity. The model is consistent with empirical data.

Hypothesis 1: Service quality has a direct influence on service innovation. It was found that service quality significantly influences service innovation at the statistical level of 0.001, with a coefficient of influence equal to 0.527. The results of this hypothesis test are consistent with the established research hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: Service quality has a direct influence on customer trust. It was found that service quality significantly influences customer trust at the statistical level of 0.001, with a coefficient of influence equal to 0.343. The results of this hypothesis test are consistent with the established research hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: Service quality has a direct influence on perceived value. It was found that service quality significantly influences perceived value at the statistical level of 0.001, with a coefficient of influence equal to 0.644. The results of this hypothesis test are consistent with the established research hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4: Service quality has a direct influence on customer loyalty. It was found that service quality significantly influences customer loyalty at the statistical level of 0.01, with a coefficient of influence equal to 0.236. The results of this hypothesis test are consistent with the established research hypothesis.

Hypothesis 5: Service innovation has a direct influence on customer loyalty. It was found that service innovation significantly influences customer loyalty at the statistical level of 0.001, with a coefficient of influence equal to 0.228. The results of this hypothesis test are consistent with the established research hypothesis.

Hypothesis 6: Service innovation has a direct influence on customer trust. It was found that service innovation significantly influences customer trust at the statistical level of 0.01, with a coefficient of influence equal to 0.186. The results of this hypothesis test are consistent with the established research hypothesis.

Hypothesis 7: Perceived value has a direct influence on customer trust. It was found that perceived value significantly influences customer trust at the statistical level of 0.001, with a coefficient of influence equal to 0.254. The results of this hypothesis test are consistent with the established research hypothesis.

Hypothesis 8: Perceived value has a direct influence on customer loyalty. It was found that perceived value significantly influences customer loyalty at the statistical level of 0.05, with a coefficient of influence equal to 0.167. The results of this hypothesis test are consistent with the established research hypothesis.

Hypothesis 9: Customer trust has a direct influence on customer loyalty. It was found that customer trust significantly influences customer loyalty at the statistical level of 0.05, with a coefficient of influence equal to 0.155. The results of this hypothesis test are consistent with the established research hypothesis.

S2PC2 Model refers to Customer Trust, represented by the letter "C" in the S2PC2 Model. Customer Trust is a crucial factor in the international personal belongings moving business, as this type of business involves the care and management of transporting items that hold both physical and emotional value for customers. The ability for customers to trust that the company will safely and effectively handle their belongings significantly contributes to customer confidence and satisfaction.



Figure 2: 2S2PC2 Model

Customer Trust consists of three main components: Competence, Reliability, and Integrity, all of which are essential for building and maintaining a good relationship with customers.

Competence: Competence refers to the company's skills and expertise in providing professional moving services. When customers perceive that the company possesses the skills and knowledge to handle international relocations, manage customs documentation, and utilize modern technology to enhance the security of the moving process, it fosters trust. This perception leads customers to feel confident in the quality and standards of the services provided.

Reliability: Reliability pertains to the consistency and responsibility in service delivery. When a company can deliver services that meet customer agreements and expectations, such as timely transportation and the safeguarding of belongings, it instills confidence in customers that they can depend on the company. Continuous and stable service delivery is a key factor in establishing reliability, allowing customers to feel at ease when using the services.

Integrity: Integrity means transparency and fairness in operations. Companies that prioritize clear and honest communication with customers, such as providing relevant information about the moving process and fair pricing, as well as handling problems or errors professionally and responsibly, can foster trust. Integrity in service delivery is crucial for building and maintaining long-term relationships with customers.

Finally, these components culminate in the S2PC2 Model, which incorporates the influences of service quality, service innovation, perceived value, and customer trust, leading to an increase in customer loyalty levels, as illustrated in Figure 2.

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