ABSTRACT

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR VASSANA MAPRASERT: The Service Relationship Double-Bond Model: Customer-Business Context
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During the recent years, relationship marketing has received much interest in the academic marketing research and practice, because the building of strong customer relationship has been suggested to lead to a sustainable competitive advantage and long-term business success. This study reviews research studies that have investigated relationship between customer and service business, and finds that most research studies emphasize on either relationship between customer and service firm or service provider, which makes some practical customer relationship programs successful while others fail.

However, the author argues that in order to capture the nature of relationship between customer and service business, we have to take into consideration both customer relationship with service firm and customer relationship with service provider, which may enhance in the success of service business. Therefore, the purposes of this study are to develop measures, and test a service relationship double-bond model that can capture a true nature of relationship between customer and service business.

Thus, the author proposes the conceptual double-bond model of service relationship: customer-service business context, which has two levels (i.e., service firm and service provider) and examines its antecedents and consequences. In addition, this study also investigates whether the nature of service relationship is stable across service industries.

Survey design by two-stage cluster sampling with self-administered questionnaire is used to collect data from 400 customers of life insurance service and VCD rental service in Thailand (i.e., 200 customers in each service industry). Reliability analysis, principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation, descriptive statistics, and AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures) version 4 are used to analyze the data.

The results of this study show that the double-bond model (i.e., relationship with service firm and service provider) is superior to the single-bond model (i.e., service firm or service provider only). In addition, most of the hypotheses are supported with only few exceptions. Therefore, marketers have to take into consideration the nature of service relationship: customer-business context that has two levels (i.e., service firm and service provider) in order to help them develop successful customer relationship programs and strategies.

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