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# DIGITAL MARKETING AND SERVICE QUALITY THAT INFLUENCE THE BRAND IMAGE IN THAILAND

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## Abstract

This research is a quantitative study with the objective to analyze the influence of digital marketing and service quality on the brand image of processed agricultural products in Thailand. The research population consists of consumers using processed agricultural products in Chumphon Province. The research utilized a questionnaire that underwent quality checking. Statistical analysis methods included frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and multiple regression analysis. The majority of respondents were females, aged over 40, with an occupation in agriculture, and earning a monthly income between 20,001 to 30,000 THB. Regarding opinions on digital marketing, service quality, and brand image of processed agricultural products in Thailand, brand creation had the highest average score, while customer relationship management had the lowest. In terms of service quality, integrity had the highest average score, and responsiveness had the lowest. For brand image, brand support had the highest average score, while brand reputation had the lowest. The results of hypothesis testing showed that digital marketing influencing the brand image of processed agricultural products in Thailand together predicted 71.4%, with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.086 to 0.245, statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Service quality influencing the brand image of processed agricultural products in Thailand together predicted 77%, with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.107 to 0.315, statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

**Keywords:** Agricultural Products, Service Quality, Brand Image, Digital Marketing

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## Introduction

The overall situation of agricultural and food prices in Thailand is reflected by the food price index compiled by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). In 2022 (January-November, 2022), the average food price index stood at 144.9. The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives participated in an event titled “Agriculture in the COVID Era: Transforming Crisis into Sustainability” to highlight the importance and role of the agricultural sector in all disciplines as a fundamental foundation for leading the country through crisis situations. The existing resources in the communities are utilized and combined with modern science and technology in a balanced manner to create value for the agricultural production sector through agro-processing products, predominantly community enterprises with potential. However, considering the initial potential, expertise in marketing, and knowledge in digital marketing management are lacking. Therefore, related agencies should particularly promote online marketing and further develop unique product designs to align with the rapidly changing market and the needs and lifestyles of new-age customers.

Amidst the changing trends and globalization, the government has set digital policies for the economy and society as crucial for the country’s development in all aspects, including stability, prosperity, and sustainability. As a developed country, it adheres to the principles of a sustainable economy according to the national strategic direction. In the development of a bio-economy, circular economy, and green economy (BCG), the main goal is to transition production structures to an innovative economy, develop people for the new world, aim for a society of opportunities and fairness, and shift production and consumption towards sustainability. Strengthening the country’s capabilities to cope with risks and changes in the context of the new world, most businesses use online media to support the enhancement of business capabilities and market bases, which come in various forms, including sales media, distribution consulting, and customer care, leading to increased popularity. This allows users to access various types of online media conveniently and quickly, enabling them to freely share knowledge, information, and news, and engage in immediate interactions. Online media channels pass through various electronic network platforms, including general computers, laptops, mobile phones, and other electronic devices. Communication through these channels helps marketing reach target groups more effectively.

According to the survey, the most preferred channel for online shopping is e-Marketplace, with the primary reason being affordability (63.10%), followed by product variety (58.73%), user-friendly platforms (45.81%), promotional events such as 11.11, 12.12, Flash Sales (44.39%), and cheap or free delivery (34.10%). Meanwhile, sellers prefer Social Commerce channels for selling products/services, with Facebook being the most utilized, accounting for 66.76%. Additionally, it was found that most shoppers prefer to make payments through website transfers or banking application transfers, accounting for 67.32% (Electronic Transactions Development Agency, 2023). This has led to a need for the agricultural sector to adapt from traditional offline marketing to digital marketing, particularly in the form of online marketing. Processed agricultural products have gained popularity and face high competition, prompting the need for marketing strategies, organizational management, and service quality to enhance the product image. As it is crucial to develop and enhance competitiveness in processed agricultural products, the researchers aim to analyze digital marketing and service quality’s influence on the image of Thai agricultural products.

## Literature Review

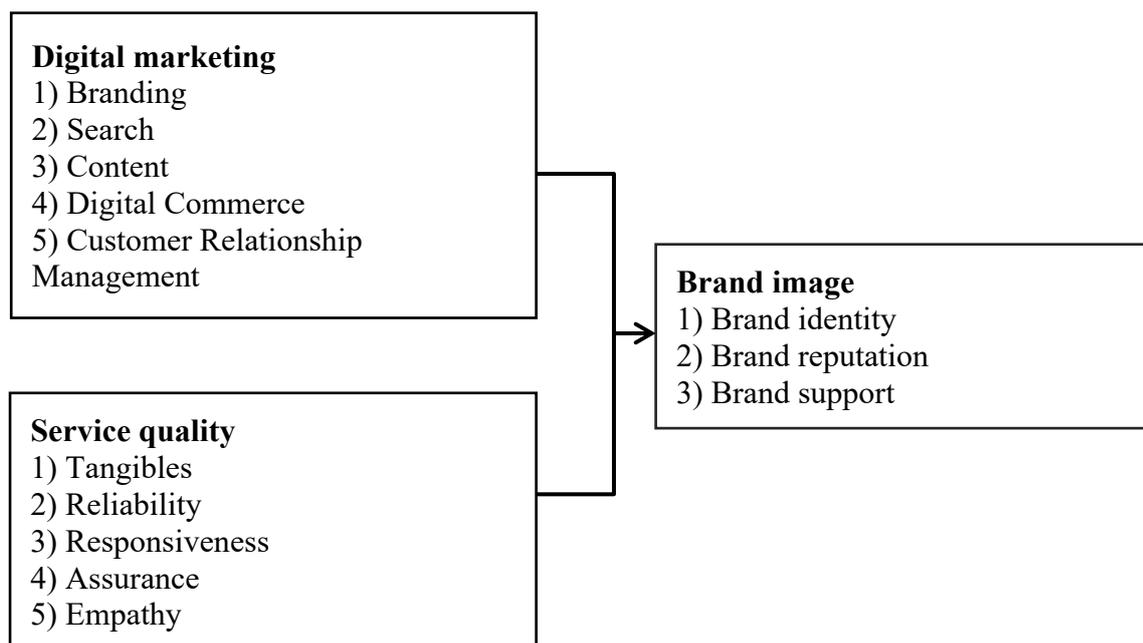
Based on the research on digital marketing and service quality influencing the brand image of cold-pressed coconut oil products in Chumphon Province, Thailand, the researchers conducted a literature review to study concepts, theories, and related research works as follows.

Dastane (2020) stated that digital advertising and purchasing objectives serve as an intermediary for CRM (Customer Relationship Management) in Malaysia's e-commerce industry. Digital marketing positively influences and significantly affects purchase intentions. Digital marketing increases purchase intentions by integrating technology advancements and utilizing various devices. It introduces new avenues for online shopping and interaction, allowing consumers to effectively communicate and share product usage or experiences, thereby affecting purchase intentions. Yotkaew (2021) mentioned that as marketing systems transition into digital markets, everything on the internet can be accessed through various devices such as computers, mobile phones, or televisions via the internet. Websites, social media, and applications have become key components of digital marketing, aimed at effective market activities and communication with consumers. Tangsanga (2017) and Phornpraphan (2022) have developed digital marketing channels to create market activities and communicate with consumers, comprising: 1) Branding activities aimed at brand image creation to enhance brand recall; 2) Search resembling product or service representatives, 3) Content essential for gaining consumer trust, 4) Digital Commerce involving readiness preparation for online retailers before website promotion and actual product sales, and 5) Customer Relationship Management (CRM) related to sales and service provision in locations convenient for customers. A consolidated database enables employees to access customer data while conducting sales or providing services to customers.

Parasuraman et al. (1988) developed a tool for assessing service quality by defining five dimensions: (1) Tangibles, (2) Reliability, (3) Responsiveness, (4) Assurance, and (5) Empathy. These characteristics create customer expectations, leading to customer satisfaction and repeat service usage to formulate the policy plan in services. Similarly, Lee & Lin (2005) proposed five dimensions of electronic service quality: (1) Website Design, (2) Reliability, (3) Responsiveness, (4) Trust, and (5) Personalization. They emphasized that design should align with user needs, ensuring reliability, accurate responsiveness, timely delivery, privacy maintenance, and security. Thongkhum et al. (2022) found that the innovation in service affects service value creation, business value, satisfaction, and operational performance. Focusing on customers and innovation capabilities contributes to customer satisfaction by building trust that supports user satisfaction. Sereewattana (2020) highlighted the importance of service quality in both qualitative and quantitative aspects, leading to customer perception and recognition of a business's good image, as well as word-of-mouth promotion of the received service quality. Regarding the importance in a quantitative aspect, when consumers trust the quality of products and services they receive, it leads to increased revenue and market share for companies. This agrees with Gronroos (1990); Zineldin (1996); Wisner & Corney (2001), stating that service quality involves expected service perceptions from service providers. The ability to respond to needs is the most critical factor in differentiating businesses from competitors. These have characteristics and components of: (1) Concreteness with the communication style that should be clear, specific, and focused without ambiguity or uncertainty. The content must not be interpreted as something else. (2) Credibility has the characteristics that the way the recipient thinks about the information source is a factor that determines whether the recipient will accept or reject the information. (3) Response has the characteristics of reactive nature or various behaviors that is expressed when a person is stimulated by a stimulus, both the observable and the unobservable. (4) Confidence has the characteristics of creating confidence for customers. This is a characteristic of creating beliefs in the positive attitude of customers towards the organization. (5) Understanding customers involve the ability to cater to the diverse needs of customers, respectively.

The concept of product branding according to Kotler et al. (2020); Feongkeaw (2021), revolves around the idea that an image is a combination of beliefs, thoughts, and impressions that individuals hold about something. This perception and any actions people take concerning it

are highly correlated with the Product/Service Image. Product or service image is the perception individuals have solely about the products and services of a company, excluding the organization or company itself. On the other hand, brand image refers to the perception individuals have about a specific product brand, trademark, or label, mostly used in advertising and sales promotion. Kotler & Armstrong (2020) stated that product branding is the use of a name, symbol, design, or a combination of these elements to identify the products or services of one seller and differentiate them from those of competitors. By establishing this branding, consumers perceive the brand as a crucial part of the product. Additionally, branding can enhance the value and image of the product, contributing to its memorability. Similarly, Sereewattana (2020) highlighted that the brand image is a value and unique characteristic of any type of product, which is related to the organization. Building a brand image may result from effective marketing and advertising activities with the aim of gaining acceptance and fostering positive attitudes towards the product in terms of its features, benefits, values, and user perceptions. This aligns with the findings of A. Seetharaman et al. (2001) discovering that the brand image has both tangible and intangible aspects and can enable consumers to identify the product. Essentially, brand image is a combination of attitudes and values of both the product owner and the consumer, which cannot be separated. These include: 1) Brand identity: Some aspects of the brand that are distinctive and may include symbols, color patterns, and differentiating typography, 2) Brand reputation: Involves portraying the brand image to create a perception that adds value to the product and increases consumer interest, 3) Brand support: Involves promotional activities aimed at encouraging consumer response and promoting the product, forming the framework for research concepts.



**Figure 1** Conceptual Framework

### **Research Methodology**

This research is quantitative in nature, utilizing questionnaires as the primary tool. The purpose is to analyze basic data and factors of the population used in this study, which are consumers of processed agricultural products in Thailand. The sample size was determined using the formula by W.G. Cochran (1997), resulting in 385 individuals. The sample was selected using simple random sampling. The questionnaire underwent quality checks for validity and reliability, assessed using the alpha coefficient, which yielded a value of 0.965. Data was

collected from two sources: primary data and secondary data. Descriptive statistics were employed for data analysis, including percentages, frequencies, means, and standard deviations. Additionally, inferential statistics were used to test hypotheses, employing multiple regression analysis.

### Research Findings

The researchers analyzed the relationship between independent and dependent variables using correlation analysis to test the hypothesis of correlation. In testing the hypothesis of prediction, the researchers examined multicollinearity among independent variables using correlation analysis. No significant multicollinearity was found among the independent variables. Therefore, the researchers proceeded to test the hypothesis of prediction using multiple regression analysis with the Enter Method.

**Table 1** Digital Marketing influences the image of processed agricultural product brands in Thailand

Digital marketing	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
<b>Constant</b>	2.925	1.375	-	2.128	0.034
1) Branding (X <sub>1</sub> )	0.280	0.199	0.086	1.407	0.160
2) Search (X <sub>2</sub> )	0.426	0.156	0.158	2.735	0.007
3) Content (X <sub>3</sub> )	0.706	0.175	0.225	4.031	0.000
4) Digital Commerce (X <sub>4</sub> )	0.731	0.138	0.245	5.308	0.000
5) Customer Relationship Management (X <sub>5</sub> )	0.624	0.124	0.228	5.038	0.000

R = 0.845, R<sup>2</sup> = 0.714, S<sub>e</sub>set = 2.220, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = 0.711, F = 189.551, Sig = 0.000

The digital marketing factors influencing the brand image of processed agricultural products in Thailand. The independent variables of digital marketing including branding, search, content, digital commerce, and customer relationship management were forecasted and explained the dependent variables at 71.4%. The correlation ranged from 0.086 to 0.245, consistent with Dastane (2020), who stated that digital advertising and purchase intent are intermediaries of CRM (Customer Relationship Management). For Malaysia's e-commerce industry, the digital marketing yields positive impact on the purchase intent. This agrees with Yotkaew (2021) assertion that as marketing systems transition to digital platforms, everything on the internet can be perceived through media or electronic devices. Additionally, Tangsanga (2017) and Phornraphan (2022) mentioned that digital marketing comprises branding, search, content, digital commerce, and customer relationship management. Furthermore, Kaewhavong & Lalaeng (2021) conducted the research on digital marketing's influence on consumer online purchasing decisions and found that all five aspects of digital marketing comprising content marketing websites, homepage emails, and social media affect consumers' online purchasing decisions.

**Table 2** Service quality influences the brand image of processed agricultural products in Thailand

Service quality	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
<b>Constant</b>	3.459	1.146	-	3.018	0.003
1) Tangibles (X <sub>1</sub> )	0.365	0.124	0.126	2.949	0.003
2) Reliability (X <sub>2</sub> )	0.590	0.137	0.195	4.320	0.000
3) Responsiveness (X <sub>3</sub> )	0.302	0.135	0.107	2.235	0.026
4) Assurance (X <sub>4</sub> )	0.674	0.123	0.237	5.474	0.000
5) Empathy (X <sub>5</sub> )	0.819	0.122	0.315	6.697	0.000
R = 0.878, R <sup>2</sup> = 0.770, Se <sub>set</sub> = 1.992, Adj R <sup>2</sup> = 0.767, F = 253.820, Sig = 0.000					

The quality of service has a significant impact on the brand image of processed agricultural products in Thailand. The independent variables of service quality comprise Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy. These variables were forecasted and explained at 77%, with correlations ranging from 0.107 to 0.315. Parasuraman et al. (1988) introduced five dimensions of service quality that affect customer expectations, satisfaction, and repeat patronage. Similarly, Lee & Lin (2005) discussed the dimensions of e-service quality that correlate with user interaction, trust, accurate responsiveness, timely delivery, privacy, and security. Additionally, Thongkhum et al. (2022) found that service value creation and business value creation affect customer satisfaction and loyalty, while customer focus and innovation capability influence satisfaction and trust, leading to increased customer satisfaction. This agrees with Sereewattana (2020) finding that service quality is important in terms of quality. If the brand is well known and accepted, it will make customers remember and have a good image of the business. There has been an increase in income and market share. Gronroos (1990); Zineldin (1996); Wisner & Corney (2001); Ninlaput (2018) found that service quality in building trust, tangibility, access to service sources, convenience, and facilities of the service source are related to the repetitive use of service.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, digital marketing and service quality jointly influence the brand image of processed agricultural products in Thailand. New insights from branding studies do not affect the product image of processed agricultural products in Thailand. Agricultural products have inherent uniqueness and identity, which shape their product image and continuously influence purchasing decisions.

## Suggestions

- 1) Based on the study findings, it was discovered that digital readiness and online tools have the strongest correlation with building the brand image of agricultural processed products. Therefore, operators should enhance and develop strategies for customer engagement to increase competitiveness.
- 2) From the study results on confidence, it is recommended that businesses improve their management processes to instill confidence in buyers. This includes enhancing all stages of post-sales services, communication, and ensuring accurate and secure information dissemination.
- 3) Government agencies should increase their policies and support for the development of production, transportation, and technology dissemination to strengthen digital marketing and service quality, thereby expanding market opportunities.

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