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Mediating Role of Psychological Ownership between Customer Participation and Loyalty in the Third Place*

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Abstract

Purpose – The third place plays an important role in complex society. The more customers participate in the third place, the higher they have loyalty. It is necessary to identify the mediator between customer participation and loyalty. Thus, the purpose of the study is to analyze the relationship between customer participation and loyalty and a mediating role of psychological ownership.

Research design, data, and methodology – A structural equation model representing the relationships between customer participation, psychological ownership, and customer loyalty was proposed and four hypotheses were tested using data collected from visitors of Starbucks as the third place.

Results – Three hypotheses regarding relationships between customer participation, psychological ownership, and customer loyalty were supported at the significance level of 0.001. The hypothesis regarding a mediating role of psychological ownership between customer participation and customer loyalty was supported by Sobel test.

Conclusions – Customer participation positively affects psychological ownership and customer loyalty. Psychological ownership positively affects customer loyalty. Psychological ownership plays a mediating role in the relationship between customer ownership and loyalty. This study contributes to finding the missing link between customer participation and customer loyalty. The research model can be applied to various retail services. Some implications for academics and practitioners were suggested.

Keywords: Customer Participation, Psychological Ownership, Customer Loyalty, Starbucks, Retail.

JEL Classifications: M10, M14, M19.

1. Introduction

The third place is the great good place where is apt to make individuals feel more comfortable, pleasant, and cozy other than homes as the first place and workplaces as the second place (Oldenburg, 1989; Oldenburg, 2001). Many researchers (Cabras & Mount, 2017; Daisuke et al., 2015; Jeffres et al., 2009; Mikunda & Blomen, 2006) have been studying its roles, usefulness, and values since Oldenburg (1989, 1991) had introduced the concept of the third place. Howard Schultz (Chairman and former CEO of Starbucks)

argues that Starbucks is a cozy home-away-from-home as a third place (Rice, 2009). According to Pangarkar (2015), Starbucks had been implementing strategic changes as the third place. According to Korea Consumer Agency (KCG), Starbucks ranked the best coffee-shop franchise in South Korea in 2016. KCG conducted the survey regarding consumers' satisfaction in terms of shop accessibility, customer service, taste and variety of items, and overall preference (Korea Consumer Agency, 2017). Coffee shop is a part of franchise retailing services (Kim & Shim, 2017; Shin et al., 2015) and Starbucks is a typical example of the third place.

How does the third place drive customer loyalty? Many studies give the evidence that customer loyalty has a positive influence on firm performance (Oliver, 1999; Watson IV et al., 2015). Commitment, trust, satisfaction, and incentives such as reward programs and favorable treatment

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are antecedents of customer loyalty(Watson IV et al., 2015). Customer involvement also has positive effect on customer loyalty(Liu et al., 2016). Customers as partial employees (Hsieh et al., 2004; Mills & Morris, 1986) participate into business processes in the third place. Services cannot be complete without customers' participation because production or operations in service industry which cannot be separated from its consumption. Customer participation has not only directly an effect of his(or her) loyalty(Holland et al., 2001), but also indirectly influences customer loyalty. It is necessary to identify the mediator between customer participation and loyalty. Thus, the purpose of the study is to analyze the relationship between customer participation and loyalty and a mediating role of psychological ownership.

Recently, a few studies address customers' psychological ownership(Asatryan & Oh, 2008, Lee & Suh, 2015; Sinclair & Tinson, 2017; Zhao et al., 2016) while many studies regarding employees' psychological ownership have been conducting(Aveyet et al., 2009; Dirkset et al., 1996; Pierce et al., 2001, 2004; Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004). The more customers participate into business processes in the third place, the greater they feel psychological ownership. The psychological ownership enforces customer loyalty toward the third place. This study presents a structural equation model and tests four hypotheses regarding relationships between customer participation, psychological ownership, and customer loyalty by using data collected from customers of Starbucks as a third place.

2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

Mikunda(2004) extended a concept of the third place. According to Mikunda(2004), the third place can be a landmark, be designed for malling, feature a concept line, and draw people with a core attraction. The third place enables people to do social interactions and offer emotional supports(Rosenbaum, 2006). Rosenbaum(2006) classified the third place into a place-as-practical where individual's utility is satisfied, a place-as-gathering where individual's social needs are satisfied, and place-as-home where individual's emotional needs is satisfied. The third place builds communities, facilitates social communication, and enhances quality of life in the communities(Jeffres et al., 2009). Store environments or surroundings have an effect on consumers' shopping behaviors(Ryu & Bringham, 2015). According to Jeffres et al.(2009), 71 percent of respondents in U.S. households answered to the question asking whether having the third place as "yes". According to Cabras and Mount (2017), the third place enforces community cohesion, and fosters economic development and social capital.

Activity involvement in the third place positively influences place attachment, then place attachment has a positive effect on visitor's loyalty toward the third place(Luo et al.,

2016). Place attachment refers to the bonding of people to places(Altman & Low, 1992). Many studies regarding place attachment have been conducting in a variety of areas. Place attachment results from repeated visits and experiences from the place(Gustafson, 2001). Place attachment is associated with psychological ownership which includes psychological attachment to a place.

Customer participation has been a promising research subject in the area of marketing for a long time. Customer participation increases firm productivity(Lovelock & Young, 1979), and contributes to achieving competitive advantage (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2000). Customers are considered as co-creator of value beyond simple purchasers(Fang, 2008; Payne et al., 2008; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2000). Open innovation and collective intelligence are broadly applied to various areas(Chesbrough, 2003) and information technology allows customers to participate conveniently into business processes(Joo et al., 2016).

Many researchers have been doing the studies regrading antecedents and outcomes of psychological ownership within organizations since Pierce et al.(2001) had proposed the theory of psychological ownership. According to Pierce et al. (2001), psychological ownership is the state of mind in which an individual feels as if the target of ownership or a piece of it is mine. In other words, psychological ownership is defined as a cognitive and emotive attachment between the customer and the third place as a target or an object (Pierce et al., 2001). Asatryan and Oh(2008)'s study regarding restaurant customers shows that customer participation positively affects psychological ownership. According to Joo and Marakhimov(2017), customers perceive belongingness to the firms because they are a core member of the business ecosystem. Thus, the more actively customers participate into business processes, the more likely they are to perceive psychological ownership toward the firm or the third place. Joo and Marakhimov(2017)'s empirical study regarding psychological ownership toward Facebook shows that customer participation positively influences psychological ownership.

Customers who proactively communicate and cooperate with the third place by providing feedback and suggestions feel a stronger psychological ownership resulting from place attachment and compassion toward the third place. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

<Hypothesis 1> Customer participation has a positive influence on psychological ownership toward the third place.

Loyal customers tend to have low sensitivity to price and spread positive word-of-mouth about a firm to others(Dick & Basu, 1994; Yang et al., 2004). According to Liu et al. (2016), customer involvement in smart phone market has a positive relationship with customer loyalty. Proactive customer participation in virtual communities affects positively

brand loyalty(Chan & Li, 2010). Customer participation in service industry has a significant and positive impact on customer loyalty(Eisingerich et al., 2006). For instance, as customers participate and become involved in the service, they share credits with each other. Kamboj et al.(2018)'s study regarding the relationship between brand loyalty and customer participation in social networking services(SNSs) suggested an evidence that customer participation into SNS had a positive effect on brand loyalty and brand trust. The more actively customers participate in the business process of the third place, the higher loyalty is likely to be provided. Therefore, the following hypothesis is postulated:

<Hypothesis 2> Customer participation has a positive influence on customer loyalty.

Lee and Suh(2015) suggested satisfaction, self-esteem, and quality/quantity of contributions as consequences of psychological ownership in virtual community. The quality and quantity of contributions are measured those of the knowledge or information shared by members in this community. The quality and quantity of contributions in virtual communities are associated with users' loyalty. The stronger psychological ownership toward Facebook users feel, the more positively they spread word-of-mouth to others(Joo & Marakhimov, 2017). Sinclair and Tinson(2017) identified the motivations and the outcomes of psychological ownership resulting from consumers' experiences of music streaming by investigating qualitative data based on interviews. Users' psychological ownership toward streaming music stores has a positive effect on their loyalty(Sinclair & Tinson, 2017). Zhao et al.(2016) proposed a research model integrating psychological ownership and TAM(technology acceptance model) and examined the antecedents and the outcomes of psychological ownership by analyzing data collected from users of LINE as a social network service. Users' psychological ownership influences their satisfaction and loyalty such as continuance usage and willingness to pay more(Zhao et al., 2016).

Customers who feel a stronger sense of psychological ownership toward the third place are likely to have a higher loyalty. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

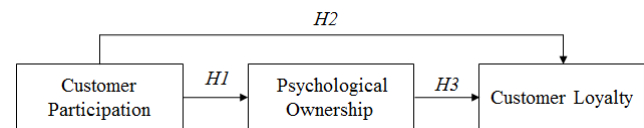
<Hypothesis 3> Psychological ownership has a positive influence on customer loyalty.

<Table 1> shows previous studies regarding the relationships between customer participation, customer's psychological ownership, or customer loyalty. The previous studies did not deal with a mediating role of psychological ownership although they suggested the evidences that customer participation had an influence on loyalty.

<Table 1> Previous studies related to the relationships between customer participation, customer's psychological ownership, or loyalty

Author(year)	Overview
Asatryan & Oh (2008)	They argued that customer participation had positive influence on psychological ownership by using data collected from restaurant customers
Joo & Marakhimov (2017)	They conducted an empirical study regarding the relationship between customer participation and psychological ownership toward Facebook
Kamboj et al. (2018)	They argued that customer participation into SNS had a positive effect on brand loyalty and brand trust.
Zhao et al. (2016)	They argued that users' psychological ownership had an influence on their satisfaction and loyalty such as continuance usage and willingness to pay more

The research model is derived from three hypotheses regarding between customer participation, psychological ownership, and customer loyalty toward the third place as shown in <Figure 1>. <Table 2> shows operational definition of each construct.



<Figure 1> Research model

<Table 2> Operational definition

Construct	Definition	Source
Customer participation (CP)	The degree to which a customer attentively communicates and cooperate with Starbucks by providing feedback and suggestions	Joo & Marakhimov (2017), Wu (2011)
Psychological ownership (PO)	The degree to which a customer represents concern or pleasure as if the failure and success of Starbucks are mine, and feels a sense of ownership toward Starbucks as if it is my home or my company.	Kroth & Keeler (2009), Joo & Marakhimov (2017)
Customer loyalty (CL)	The degree to which a customer revisits the store, disseminates positive word of mouth and recommends the store to friends and family	Eisingerich et al. (2014)

Finally, the following hypothesis regarding meditation of psychological ownership is proposed:

<Hypothesis 4> Psychological ownership plays a role of the mediator between customer participation and customer loyalty.

3. Methodology and Analysis

<Table 3> shows measurement items for each construct. Each questionnaire item used to measure three constructs in <Table 3> is assessed employing a five-point Likert scale.

<Table 3> Measurement items

Construct	Code	Questionnaire items	Reference
Customer Participation (CP)	CP1	I intend to let Starbucks know the ways that can better serve my needs.	Chan et al. (2010), Wu(2011), Groth(2005)
	CP2	When Starbucks introduces a new service, I intend to comments about it.	
	CP3	When I experience a problem with services, I intend to let Starbucks know about it.	
	CP4	I intend to give Starbucks my full cooperation.	
	CP5	I intend to make suggestions to Starbucks if I have a useful idea on how to improve the service.	
Psychological Ownership (PO)	PO1	I feel bad if stories in the media criticize Starbucks.	Pierce et al. (2001), Joo & Marakhimov (2017)
	PO2	I feel pleased when someone praises Starbucks.	
	PO3	I feel that success of Starbucks is my success.	
	PO4	I feel a sense of ownership toward Starbucks as if it is my home or my company.	
Customer Loyalty (CL)	CL1	I speak positively about Starbucks to others.	Eisingerich et al.(2014), Hong et al. (2011)
	CL2	I positively evaluate Starbucks.	
	CL3	I recommend Facebook to others.	

261 valid samples were collected from customers of Starbucks coffee shops located in Gyeongju and Pohang cities. SPSS and AMOS were used to analyze data and test hypotheses. <Table 4> shows demographics including respondents' gender, age, and years of using Starbucks. The ratio of male respondents is similar to that of female. An age range of 20 to 30 years is 60.5 percent. The ratio of respondents who become a year since first visit at Starbucks coffee shop is 41.8 percent and average visit duration is 2.56 years.

<Table 4> Demographics of respondents

	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	125	47.9
	Female	136	52.1
Age	< 20 years	6	2.3
	20 – 29	158	60.5
	30 – 39	37	14.2
	40 – 49	33	12.6
	≥ 50 years	27	10.4
Experience	1 year	109	41.8
	2 years	35	13.4
	3 years	37	14.2
	4 years	23	8.8
	Over 5 years	57	21.8

Exploratory factor analysis(EFA) was conducted using principal component analysis with Varimax rotation as shown in <Table 5>. The EFA identified three factors with eigenvalues over 1.0. All items had high loadings to their corresponding factors. Cronbach's alpha for each variable is over 0.7 which indicates satisfactory internal consistency(Hair et al., 2006).

<Table 5> Exploratory factor analysis

Rotated Component Matrix							
	Code	Factor			Eigen-value	Variance (%)	Cronbach's alpha
		1	2	3			
CP	CP1	.141	.805	.220	2.121	17.676	0.877
	CP2	.116	.829	.117			
	CP3	-.044	.843	.075			
	CP4	.244	.753	.204			
	CP5	.333	.678	.310			
PO	PO1	.806	.166	.290	5.623	46.862	0.917
	PO2	.833	.139	.250			
	PO3	.912	.116	.090			
	PO4	.885	.143	.162			
CL	CL1	.175	.233	.810	1.182	9.850	0.816
	CL2	.152	.219	.866			
	CL3	.380	.162	.701			

CP: Customer Participation, PO: Psychological Ownership, CL: Customer Loyalty

Confirmatory factor analysis(CFA) was conducted using AMOS(version 20.0) statistical package to confirm validity as shown in <Table 6>. As indicated in <Table 6>, CR (composite reliability) values for all variables ranged from 0.840 to 0.923, exceeding 0.7 thresholds recommended by Fornel and Larcker(1981). AVE values ranged from 0.589 to 0.737, also exceeding the recommended 0.5 thresholds (Fornel & Larcker, 1981). Thus, convergent validity is satisfactory. Discriminant validity was examined by comparing the square root of AVE(average variance extracted) for each variable with inter-variable correlation coefficients. The square root of the AVE on diagonal in <Table 6> exceeded the inter-variable correlation coefficients, which presents sufficient discriminant validity(Hair et al., 2006).

<Table 6> Convergent and discriminant validity

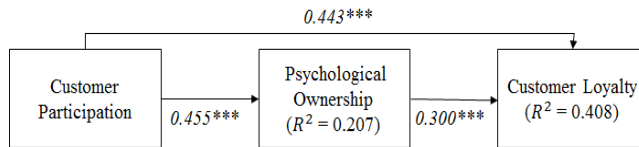
	CR	AVE	CP	PO	CL
CP	0.887	0.589	0.949		
PO	0.923	0.737	0.422	0.950	
CL	0.840	0.610	0.574	0.523	0.952

<Table 7> shows model fit indices. All model fit indices exceeded the recommended thresholds based on the guidelines provided by Hair et al.(2006).

<Table 7> Model fit indices

	GFI	AGFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Obtained	0.929	0.884	0.963	0.949	0.076
Recommended	≥ .900	≥ .850	≥ .900	≥ .900	≤ .080

<Figure 2> shows path coefficients of the research model and R^2 which indicates explanatory power of dependent variables. <Table 8> shows the results of all hypotheses test. Three hypotheses(<H1>, <H2>, and <H3>) regarding relationships between customer participation, psychological ownership, and customer loyalty were supported at the significance level of 0.001. R^2 values of psychological ownership and customer loyalty are 0.207 and 0.408 respectively which indicate satisfactory explanatory power. Customer participation and psychological ownership significantly predict customer loyalty($R^2=0.408$) in terms of variance.

**<Figure 2>** Analysis result**<Table 8>** Hypothesis test results

Hypothesis	Path	Standardized coefficient	CR	p-value	Result
H1	CP→PO	0.455	6.321	***	Supported
H2	CP→CL	0.443	5.896	***	Supported
H3	PO→CL	0.300	4.291	***	Supported
H4	CP→PO→CL	NA		***	Supported

Sobel test which represents whether a mediating variable carries the influence of independent variable and dependent variable(Preacher & Leonardelli, 2010) used to test the hypothesis 4(<H4>). Sobel test is one of the most commonly known methods testing mediating effect(Chen & Hung, 2016). Sobel test statistic is 4.880 as shown in <Table 9>. Thus, <H4> regarding a mediating role of psychological ownership between customer participation and customer loyalty was supported.

<Table 9> Sobel test result

Path	Unstandardized coefficient	Standard error	Sobel test statistic	p-value
Customer participation → Psychological ownership	0.416	0.063	4.880	0.000001
Psychological ownership → Customer loyalty	0.355	0.049		

4. Implications and Conclusions

4.1. Implications

Although a few studies dealt with the relationships between customer participation and loyalty or firm performance(Eisingerich et al., 2014; Oliver, 1999), there were no previous studies regarding a mediating role of psychological ownership between customer participation and loyalty. Recently, there are many extant studies identifying determinants of customer loyalty in retail including cafes and restaurants(Biscaia et al., 2017; Kamran-Disfani et al., 2017; Moorthy et al., 2017). Wolter et al.(2017)' study argues that true and behavioral loyalty results from customer-company identification which means "a psychological sense of oneness with an organization" (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003) rather than customer satisfaction. However, the present study suggested the first model integrating the relationships between customer participation, psychological ownership, and loyalty. The model allows academics to comprehensively consider three constructs such as customer participation, psychological ownership, and loyalty which are important to the retail sector. In particular, the present study identified the significance of customers' psychological ownership for enhancing their loyalty. Thus, the present study extends psychological ownership theory to the third place. Customers who actively participate into the third place by providing feedback and suggestions have stronger psychological ownership rather than passive customers.

The present study suggests a few implications for practitioner. Managers of the third place need to provide various options to conveniently give feedback related to operations of the third place and facilitate cooperation with customers as an approach to actively get customers participated into the third place. Second, psychological ownership results from active customer participation although there are many motives to stimulate psychological ownership such as efficacy and effectance, self-identity, and having a place(Jussila et al., 2015). A variety of people visit the third place and their personality and preferences are different. Customers can feel psychological ownership when they have a sense of feeling of exercising control and coming to know intimately the third place(Jussila et al., 2015; Pierce et al., 2001). There are some tensions between customer's psychological ownership and short-term revenue in terms of business management. Managers need to offer the place letting customers to stay freely and commit to their works to build loyal customers as well as consideration of their preferences. For an example of coffee shop, managers can face the issue of how they serve those customers who are staying at the place for a long time in terms of management of the place and revenue. By the way, managers need to recognize the positive effect of customer' time of stay

because investment of the self including customer's investment of time into the place becomes a cause of psychological ownership(Jussila et al., 2015; Pierce et al., 2001). Third, managers of the third place need to implement strategies reinforcing customers' psychological ownership through their participation because their psychological ownership positively influences their loyalty toward the third place.

4.2. Conclusions

How customers feel a sense of psychological ownership toward the third place like Starbucks coffee shop? What are the antecedent and consequence of psychological ownership toward Starbucks as a third place? Four hypotheses were tested to get answer to two research questions. In sum, customer participation positively affects psychological ownership and customer loyalty. Psychological ownership positively affects customer loyalty. Psychological ownership plays a mediating role in the relationship between customer ownership and loyalty. In my knowledge, the research model is the first one integrating the relationships among customer participation, psychological ownership, and loyalty. The present study contributes to finding the missing link between customer participation and customer loyalty by introducing psychological ownership. The research model can be applied to conduct studies regarding relations between consumers' participation and loyalty in the areas of retail services.

The present study has a limitation of generalizability that 60 percent of samples are collected from ages 20-29. Further study needs to extend the sampling scope including wide ranges of ages.

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