






“How to promote repurchase intention toward Covid-19 antigen test kits: Evidence from Thai consumers”

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HOW TO PROMOTE REPURCHASE INTENTION TOWARD COVID-19 ANTIGEN TEST KITS: EVIDENCE FROM THAI CONSUMERS

Abstract

Promoting repurchase intention to existing consumers is a crucial advantage that helps businesses manage sufficient supply for their customers and ensure their business sustainability. Business managers must understand factors that can significantly promote repurchase intention. Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of brand love, brand preference, and brand loyalty on the intention to repurchase Covid-19 antigen test kits among a sample of Thai consumers. To achieve this aim, 670 Thai people, who had used the antigen test kit for their Covid-19 testing, were invited to answer questionnaires using an online Google Forms survey. After clearing outliers, only 523 responses were deemed valid and reliable and kept for further path analysis. The research findings showed that brand love and brand preference demonstrated positive relationships with brand loyalty. In addition, brand love and brand preference displayed positive relationships with repurchase intention. In conclusion, the results emphasized brand loyalty as the primary driver of repurchase intention because of its significant impact on Thai customers.

Keywords

antigen test kit, brand preference, brand loyalty, brand love, repurchase intention

JEL Classification

M30, M31

INTRODUCTION

A firm intention can develop into a particular action or behavior in the future (Bălău, 2018). Similarly, once a person possesses a repurchase intention, it can result in an actual purchase with the same brand in the future (Herjanto & Amin, 2020). Notably, any firm enhancing customer repurchase intention can accomplish its business sustainability and competitive advantage in the current market (Ali & Bhasin, 2019; Herjanto & Amin, 2020). Thus, many firms nowadays continue investigating the repurchase intention of their customers (Herjanto & Amin, 2020).

So far, the world has been experiencing a public health crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic (Ravelo & Jerving, 2022). Thailand, a nation in Southeast Asia, has confirmed 4.7 million cases and 33 thousand mortalities (WHO, n.d.). Nevertheless, Thai citizens are living with the new normal and restarting their social lives and jobs within the current context of the pandemic, as 82% of the population have already received vaccinations (IOM Thailand, 2022).

Since the Covid-19 pandemic remains around Thailand, being infected by Covid-19 is unavoidable. Thus, Thai citizens are eager to use a self-testing measure for Covid-19 through antigen test kit products to diagnose the infection and prevent contacts with others (Sayabovorn

et al., 2022) after receiving positive results (The Voice of Nation, 2022). In this scenario, Thai citizens highly value the antigen test kits. However, although the antigen test kits have remained significant for Thai citizens, the intention to repurchase this kind of product among Thai citizens has yet to be extensively reported. Syifa Johan et al. (2020) explained that once firms understand the factors influencing customer repurchase intention, they can sufficiently manage supply and maintain sale performance. Therefore, investigating the determinants of repurchase intention in Thailand's antigen test kit industry is essential.

As consumer repurchase intention significantly promotes sale performance for businesses' sustainability and success, many studies have investigated the factors influencing repurchase intention in different industries. For example, Gomes (2022), who studied branding strategies, offered ways to promote brand preference to customers. Once customers like the brand, they will have a more positive attitude toward the brand; thus, they are also likely to return for another purchase with the same firm. On the other hand, Han et al. (2019) researched the airline service industry and recommended developing customer brand love. Once customers feel in love with the same brand, they are more likely to have an emotional attachment to the same brand; therefore, they will rebuy the product from the same brand. In contrast, Alqueza et al. (2022) considered the fast food industry and suggested promoting brand loyalty. Achieving strong brand loyalty can maintain individuals' support, and they will continue shopping with the same firms, leading to a high propensity for repurchase.

Although the relationships between brand love, brand preference, and brand loyalty on repurchase intention are vital, few studies have projected these factors on the antigen test kit industry. Furthermore, the impacts of the above factors on repurchase intention in the antigen test kit industry have remained questionable because consumers' perspectives from different industries are not the same (Kim et al., 2022). Following this research gap, the current literature needs more explanations regarding how brand love, brand preference, and brand loyalty influence consumers' intention to repurchase antigen test kits. Thus, this study aims to provide relevant evidence on this hot topic.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Regardless of the theoretical background, repurchase intention is defined as a consumer's decision to buy a product from the same brand after experiencing it. According to the theory of planned behavior (TPB), intention can lead to actual behavior (Dubihlela & Chauke, 2016). In fact, TPB particularly reveals behavioral intention that explains an individual's intention to perform a specific action based on his or her attitudes and subjective norms. Many marketing researchers have applied the TPB to predict consumer purchase behavior (Intayos et al., 2021).

Previous studies have assumed that when clients highly intend to rebuy a product from the same brand, they are most likely to demonstrate an actual repurchase action with the same brand in the future (Yasri et al., 2020). Therefore, for marketers, investigating repurchase intention has become their immediate task because being aware of

this attitude is a competitive advantage that helps their firms accomplish sale performance and business sustainability (Ali & Bhasin, 2019; Herjanto & Amin, 2020).

Herjanto and Amin (2020) describe repurchase intention as a complicated and subjective decision-making process for individuals. In the middle of the process, consumers are generally influenced by the timing and other stimuli (e.g., cultural, product, psychological, personal, and technical characteristics) that create high complexity, making it difficult for marketers to understand consumers. Thus, the repurchase intention phenomenon needs to be continuously investigated along with the current customers.

Ji and Ha (2021) used a process macro regression analysis to test brand attitude, functional quality, design quality, and online reviews on repurchase intention in the telecommunication industry. In the e-commerce sector, Aparicio et al. (2021)

used a structural equation mode (SEM) to test trust, buy frequency, and use on repurchase intention. Antwi (2021) employed a partial least square method in the online shopping service industry to test trust, commitment, price, and satisfaction on repurchase intention. In the app delivery food service, Yeo et al. (2021) applied SEM to test efficiency, usefulness, information quality, perceived risk, trust, and social influence on repurchase intention. Finally, Hasan (2021) used SEM in the electronic vehicle industry to test satisfaction, attitude, subjective norms, and functional barriers to repurchase intention.

Even though various factors are tested with repurchase intention in different industries, testing brand love (Han et al., 2019), brand loyalty (Alqueza et al., 2022), and brand preference (Gomes, 2022) with repurchase intention in the antigen test kit industry has not been widely conducted in the current literature. Lack of this kind of investigation can result in a poor understanding of consumers' insights regardless of repurchase intention.

Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) define brand love as the passionate attachment a satisfied consumer holds for the brand. Gürhan-Canli et al. (2018) describe brand love as a significant outcome of the interaction between consumers and brands. Fetscherin and Heinrich (2015) consider brand love as "intimate relations" consumers have with brands. Individuals' love develops beyond a brand like that which transforms the brand into an individual's identity (Yadav et al., 2021).

Based on conceptual comparisons, strong brand love indicates positive attitudes toward the brand (Yadav et al., 2021), whilst strong loyalty promotes high commitment to stay with the same firms (Molina-Gómez et al., 2021). These concepts have similar directions. Based on the perspectives of tourism love, once people have a positive emotion toward a specific brand, they deeply attach to the brand (Yadav et al., 2021). In love attitudes toward luxury brands, consumers keep supporting the current brand when they passionately attach to it (Shetty & Fitzsimmons, 2022). The above discussions reveal that brand love and brand loyalty demonstrate a positive link. Santos and Schlesinger (2021) note brand love as a positive

antecedent of brand loyalty in the streaming service industry. In the luxury brand industry, Shetty and Fitzsimmons (2022) underline that brand love positively influences brand loyalty.

Brand love leads to a strong desire to obtain the product (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006), whereas a high propensity of repurchase intention develops into an actual repurchase behavior (Dubihlela & Chauke, 2016). The two concepts display similar directions. Based on attitudes of fashion love, consumers are likely to buy the products from the same firms when they love using the current products (Gultekin & Turgut, 2015). From a brand love perspective, Suetrong et al. (2018) explain that a person vigorously attempts to buy products from the same brand after he/she has developed a highly intimate relationship with the brand. Thus, there is a positive link between brand love and repurchase intention. Garg et al. (2015) reveal a positive connection between brand love and repurchase intention in a brand study. Based on the fashion industry, Coelho et al. (2019) identify that increasing brand love can enhance repurchase intention.

Brand preference refers to an individual's inclination toward a particular brand (Chang & Liu, 2009), and it indicates his or her choice (Prados-Pena & Barrio-Garcia, 2020). In addition, preference expresses consumers' positive reactions toward a brand (Maymand & Razmi, 2017; Tucker, 1964). Marketers can predict consumer choice by noticing how consumers react to the brand following their degree of preference (Prados-Pena & Barrio-Garcia, 2020). Therefore, brand preference is vital to understanding consumer choice behavior (Ebrahim et al., 2016).

Based on conceptual comparisons, strong preference indicates a high priority in product selection (Prados-Pena & Barrio-Garcia, 2020). High loyalty indicates a concentration of using the same brand (Molina-Gómez et al., 2021). These two concepts reveal positive directions. In casino preference attitudes, once visitors like playing a certain game, they indeed continue playing the same game (Liu et al., 2014). Based on individuals' bank preferences, customers always prioritize their current bank as their first choice once they prefer to use the services of their current bank rather than other banks (Amoako et al., 2017).

The relationship discussions underscore a positive link between brand preference and brand loyalty. Cuong (2020) discovered that strong brand preference could lead to high brand loyalty in the pharmaceutical industry. In the social media industry, Núñez-Gómez et al. (2020) demonstrate that brand preference positively influences brand loyalty.

In perceptual comparisons, increasing brand preference develops a brand commitment (Prados-Pena & Barrio-Garcia, 2020). Repurchase intention remains a central concept of developing an actual repurchase behavior (Yasri et al., 2020). These concepts outline similar directions. Based on the repurchase attitude in insurance services, a person is likely to repeat his or her purchase with the current service provider if he or she likes the firm's services (Hellier et al., 2003). In the repurchase attitude of mobile phones, high preference enhances individuals' desire to commit to staying with the same brand and to repurchase the product in the future (Ebrahim et al., 2016). The theoretical discussions indicate a positive connection between brand preference and repurchase intention. Yasri et al. (2020) discovered that brand preference and repurchase intention demonstrate a positive relationship in the snack food industry. Setiowati and Liem (2018) emphasize that strong brand preference results in high repurchase intention in the candy product industry.

Brand loyalty is conceptualized as a person's degree of commitment and desire to continue supporting the current brand despite any changes in product condition (Molina-Gómez et al., 2021). Loyalty can occur when the person possesses one aspect of dimensional loyalty (e.g., affective, cognitive, action, and conative loyalty) (Oliver, 1999). However, loyalty requires further observation of individuals' attitudes and behaviors (Harris & Goode, 2004). Therefore, marketing investigators also use the theory of planned behavior (TPB) to explain consumer loyalty and predict the future tendency of repurchase since consumer loyalty is a clue to repeat purchases (Molina-Gómez et al., 2021).

In perceptual comparisons, high loyalty displays a strong propensity for repeat purchases

(Molina-Gómez et al., 2021). High intention to repurchase can result in an actual purchase with the same firms (Yasri et al., 2020). These perceptions highlight a similar direction. In attitudes regarding food delivery services, once consumers continue their support of the same firms, they generally show more desire to buy the products from the same firms again (Donsuchit & Nuangjamnong, 2022). Based on tourism repurchase perspectives, an attempt to repurchase the product in the future happens when a customer remains positive and prioritizes the current firm as his or her first option (Laparojkit & Suttipun, 2022).

The literature review has shown that brand loyalty is likely to positively impact repurchase intention. For example, Chatzoglou et al. (2022) found that high brand loyalty can create firm repurchase intention in retail shopping. Furthermore, in the fast food context, Alqueza et al. (2022) emphasized brand loyalty as a positive determinant of repurchase intention.

2. AIM AND HYPOTHESES

This study aims to examine how brand love, brand preference, and loyalty affect the intention to rebuy the antigen test kits for Thai consumers. Based on the above theoretical discussions, a systematic impact among variables (brand love, brand preference, loyalty, and repurchase intention) was developed (Figure 1). Therefore, the hypotheses are constructed as follows:

- H1: *Increasing brand love can enhance antigen test kit brand loyalty.*
- H2: *Increasing brand love can enhance the intention to repurchase the antigen test kit.*
- H3: *Increasing brand preference can enhance antigen test kit brand loyalty.*
- H4: *Increasing brand preference can enhance the intention to repurchase the antigen test kit.*
- H5: *Increasing loyalty can enhance the intention to rebuy the antigen test kit.*

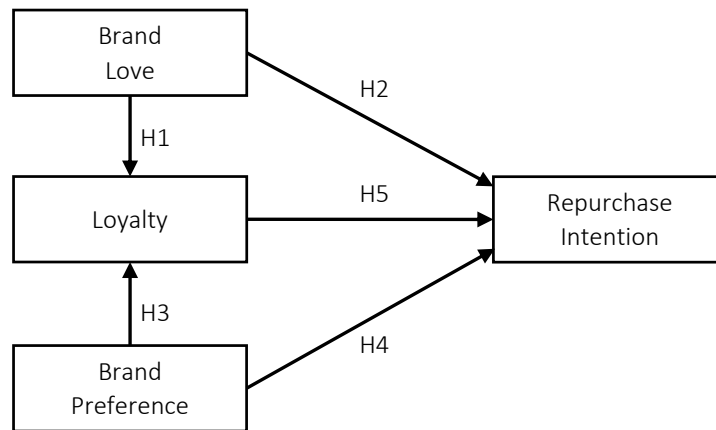


Figure 1. Theoretical framework

3. METHODOLOGY

The main objective of this paper was to understand the intention to rebuy antigen test kits in Thai consumers. To fulfill this objective, those Thai people who had previously used antigen test kits for their Covid-19 testing were considered qualified respondents for filling in self-questionnaires. Furthermore, Google Forms were created to be convenient for respondents; 670 Thai consumers participated in the survey.

Thai respondents were contacted through social media such as Facebook, Line, and Instagram. They had to pass the screening question, “Did you use to purchase the antigen test kit product for Covid-19 testing?” Once those people said “Yes,” they received a link to complete an online survey after they agreed to participate in the online survey. Finally, the data of all 670 were gathered at the end of January 2023. However, after using the Mohallanobis technique (scores < 0.0001 indicating outliers) to check data validity, only a 78% (the data of 523) respondent rate was considered valid for data analysis.

Four main variables were adopted from previous studies. First, items of brand love were adopted from Joshi et al. (2021). Second, items of brand preference were adopted from Dam (2020). Third, items of brand loyalty were adopted from Mosavi et al. (2018). Lastly, items of repurchase intention were adopted from Ali and Bhasin (2019).

This survey applied a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) in the self-

administered questionnaires. In addition, this Likert scale contained a mid-point (3 = neutral), dividing a clear boundary between the negative and positive scales (Kim & Jindabot, 2022); thus, it made it easy for the respondents to rate their answers. Lastly, this scale saved respondents’ time and effort, lowering their frustration and stress (Kim et al., 2022).

4. RESULTS

This study used the path analysis technique to analyze the valid data. Before performing regressions, a few steps had to be completed. First, content reliability was checked using Cronbach’s Alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR) scores. Table 1 shows the content reliability; each variable scored above 0.7 (Kim et al., 2022; Kim & Jindabot, 2021). Next, validity was evaluated using convergent and discriminant validity. For convergent validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) (scores > 0.5) was checked (Kim & Jindabot, 2022; Sang, 2022). In Table 1, AVE scores were above the thresholds, indicating convergent validity. Regardless of discriminant validity, if the square root scores of AVEs were higher than the correlation scores of each variable, the discriminant validity existed (Kim et al., 2022). Table 2 shows that all square root scores of AVEs were higher than the correlation scores of each variable, indicating discriminant validity.

Finally, model fitness was examined using fitness indicators (e.g., GFI, NFI, CFI, and RMSEA), following Kim et al. (2021) recommendation. Table

Table 1. Reliability and convergent validity

Variable	Items	C.Alpha (α)	CR	AVE
Brand Love	That antigen test kit brand is the best fit for my need	0.73	0.88	0.89
	When considering buying an antigen test kit product, that antigen test kit brand is the most brand for me			
	I am so excited whenever I see that antigen test kit brand			
	For testing Covid-19, only that antigen test kit brand offers the best product to serve my long-life demand			
Brand Preference	I prefer to use that antigen test kit brand because it's easy to use	0.81	0.76	0.73
	I like that antigen test kit brand more than other antigen test kit brands			
	I prefer to use that antigen test kit brand because it has an explicit usage instruction			
Loyalty	I prefer to use that antigen test kit brand because it has a good packaging	0.72	0.78	0.70
	I consider myself a loyal customer of that antigen test kit brand			
	If I want to test for Covid-19, I always think about that antigen test kit brand			
Repurchase Intention	Compared to other antigen test kit brands, I am still willing to pay for the current antigen test kit brand	0.95	0.92	0.84
	I want to buy that antigen test kit brand again in the future			
	I will consider that antigen test kit brand as my first choice			
	Although its price changes, I will continue buying it next time			

Table 2. Discriminant validity

Variable	1	2	3	4
Brand Love	0.873	0.652	0.589	0.653
Brand Preference		0.841	0.476	0.597
Loyalty			0.782	0.630
Repurchase Intention				0.811

Note: Highlighted scores indicated square roots of AVE scores.

Table 3. Model fitness of path analysis

Indicator	Index Scores	Threshold	Result
GFI	0.987	>0.9	Passed
NFI	0.978	>0.9	Passed
CFI	0.945	>0.9	Passed
RMSEA	0.034	<0.08	Passed

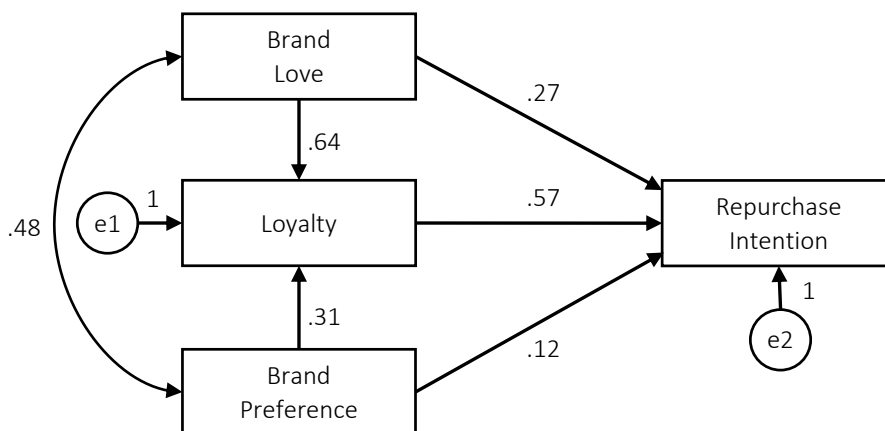


Figure 2. Path analysis findings

Table 4. Findings and hypotheses testing summary

No.	Relationships		St. Beta (β)	p-value	Sig. Lv.	Result
	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable				
1	Brand Love	Loyalty	0.64	0.000**	Sig.	Supported
2	Brand Love	Repurchase Intention	0.27	0.000**	Sig.	Supported
3	Brand Preference	Loyalty	0.31	0.000**	Sig.	Supported
4	Brand Preference	Repurchase Intention	0.12	0.019*	Sig.	Supported
5	Loyalty	Repurchase Intention	0.57	0.000**	Sig.	Supported

Note: * shows a significant level of $p < 0.05$; ** shows a significant level of $p < 0.001$.

3 demonstrates that the fitness indicators were higher than the thresholds; thus, the model is fit enough for performing regressions. As a result, the regression results of path analysis were performed in Figure 2 and Table 4.

All critical findings were performed through the path analysis method and are reported in Figure 2 and Table 4. Based on the statistical findings, brand love significantly affects loyalty ($\beta = 0.64$, $p < 0.001$), which supports hypothesis 1. Next, brand preference significantly influences loyalty ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$), which supports hypothesis 3. Regardless of influences on repurchase intention, loyalty is significantly influenced ($\beta = 0.57$, $p < 0.001$), which supports hypothesis 5. Second, brand love significantly affects repurchase intention ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.001$), which supports hypothesis 2. Lastly, brand preference significantly affects repurchase intention ($\beta = 0.12$, $p < 0.05$). Table 4 consolidates the research findings and hypotheses testing.

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Brand love positively influences the antigen test kit brand loyalty. Strong love could lead to an intense passion and an emotional attachment to a particular brand (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Therefore, when a person particularly love the brand he/she is currently using, he/she demonstrates a strong positive attitude and remains with the current brand (Shetty & Fitzsimmons, 2022; Yadav et al., 2021). Similarly, the results also highlighted that when consumers fell in love with the current antigen test kit brand, they further developed a strong bond with this brand. This situation outlined continuous support and willingness to pay for the antigen test kit of the current brand. Therefore, increasing brand love significantly enhances brand loyalty among Thai consumers.

Brand preference positively influences brand loyalty. High brand preference showed a positive attitude when a consumer primarily focused on the good points of the brand (Chang & Liu, 2009; Prados-Pena & Barrio-Garcia, 2020). Furthermore, Liu et al. (2014) emphasized that as individual preference progressed over time, it created a strong connection between the users and the brand. This scenario outlined a solid tendency to stay with the current brand. These results significantly reflected a positive attitude of the antigen test kit users, which highly indicated the current brand as a good option for their Covid-19 testing. Based on this circumstance, those antigen test kit users seemed more loyal to the current antigen test kit brand.

Brand loyalty positively influences repurchase intention. Loyalty outlined a propensity to stay with the current firm (Molina-Gómez et al., 2021). Once clients possess strong brand loyalty, they seem willing to remain connected with the current brand, even though there are some changes in its product condition. This situation reflected a tendency to repurchase among the antigen test kit consumers who energetically attempted to return and make another purchase with the same antigen test kit brand. Furthermore, when the antigen test kit brand and consumers were strongly connected, a strong commitment and willingness to pay were also built into the consumers' insights. Thus, consumers seemed to have a high desire to rebuy the antigen test kit with the same brand despite future product condition changes.

Furthermore, brand love positively influences repurchase intention. From a psychological perspective, once a person falls in love with someone, he/she has a strong desire to stay or support him/her without hesitation (Gultekin & Turgut, 2015). At the same time, they usually return to see each

other again (Suetrong et al., 2018). Based on this explanation, strong brand love could promote a commitment to staying with the same antigen test kit brand and intent to rebuy the product from the same brand. Therefore, as brand love created a strong relationship between the antigen test kit brand and consumers, it also automatically created a firm repurchase intention among the consumers.

Finally, brand preference positively influenced repurchase intention. Preference indicates a person's preferred product choice (Hellier et al., 2003). Once consumers prefer a particular brand, they consider the current brand as their primary choice for another use. Ebrahim et al. (2016) explained that preference occurred once consumers had a satisfactory experience using the current brand. If they have strong preferences for the brand, they want to try the same product as the current one. Therefore, if consumers had a high brand preference, the chance that they wanted to buy the antigen test kit product from the same brand again was also high.

In comparison, despite Thai consumers' intentions to repurchase the antigen test kit product being influenced by loyalty, brand love, and brand preference, their intention to rebuy the antigen

test kit product depended significantly upon their loyalty because loyalty had the highest impact on repurchase intention.

From a practical perspective, the results suggest that constructing strong brand loyalty to the antigen test kit will ensure consumers' repurchase intention. Hence, marketing and product development managers should promote brand loyalty as follows. First, firms can promote loyalty by increasing brand love among consumers. To build brand love, antigen test kit firms must ensure that their products serve consumers' utility purposes, allowing them to successfully get what they need. For instance, the antigen test kits must demonstrate safe packaging with clear usage instructions and be convenient to use and purchase. Thus, the antigen test kit can further develop a meaningful customer bond. Finally, firms can promote loyalty by crafting brand preferences. Marketers have to develop a new marketing campaign to outline the value of the products and other customer benefits. At the same time, they have to approach customers to seek their insights (e.g., understanding complaints and new needs), which could further develop the existing antigen test kits, satisfying the current market demands.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzed how brand love, preference, and loyalty influence Thai consumers' intentions to rebuy antigen test kit products for their Covid-19 testing. The results show that both brand love and brand preference affect brand loyalty. Meanwhile, results also revealed that brand love, loyalty, and preference significantly influence the intention to repurchase antigen test kits in Thai consumers. In comparison, even though repurchase intention was significantly influenced by the above three factors (brand love, brand preference, and brand loyalty), brand loyalty displayed the most significant impact on consumer repurchase intention. Therefore, promoting brand loyalty was the key to enhancing the intention to repurchase the antigen test kits in Thai consumers.

Even though the primary goal of this paper was completed, there are some limitations. For instance, the Google Form, in which the respondents could answer the questions themselves, possibly created biased answers. Future studies should use a different survey technique (e.g., a structural-questioned form to interview through video call) to control respondents' answers. Next, the findings were mainly applied in the antigen test kit industry; thus, they might not provide adequate explanations regarding consumer repurchase attitudes in different industries (e.g., hotels or restaurants). Therefore, the same variables should be used to further investigate those industries to find new conclusions about repurchase intention. Finally, the research findings were mainly concentrated on the influences of brand love, brand preference, and brand loyalty on repurchase intention. There could be different factors that played significant roles in developing repurchase intention. Therefore, future studies should include new variables to test their impacts on repurchase intention.

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