

Effect of service brand equity on brand relationship of selected fast food in Nigeria

Efectos del valor de la marca de servicios en un marca de comida rápida en Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Companies with a strong brand are less vulnerable to competitors' marketing methods, resulting in higher profit margins, both economically and socially. In addition, there is the issue of long-term customer loyalty and trust.

Brands, in this sense, are intangible assets that play a key role in assessing customer needs and wants and offering them something better than the competition.

Based on this premise, the objective of this study is to examine the relationship between service brand equity and brand strength. The methodology used was based on descriptive surveys, studying a group of individuals in a natural context, using primary sources. This was carried out in Lagos State, Nigeria.

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The results point to evidence of superior profits for companies with strong brands compared to their competitors, as their brands are widely known and respected. If consumers are attracted to a company's brand and associate themselves favourably with it, these customers can become the company's most lucrative clientele.

KEYWORDS

Advertising; brand; consumption; marketing.

RESUMEN

Las empresas que tienen una marca fuerte son menos vulnerables a los métodos de marketing de la competencia, lo que se traduce en mayores márgenes de beneficio, tanto a nivel económico como a nivel social. A ello, además, se le suma la cuestión de la fidelidad y confianza a largo plazo por parte de los consumidores.

Las marcas, en este sentido, son activos intangibles que desempeñan un papel fundamental en la evaluación de necesidades y deseos de los clientes y ofrecerles algo mejor que la competencia.

Partiendo de esta premisa, el objetivo de este estudio es examinar la relación entre el valor de la marca de servicios y la fuerza de esta. La metodología utilizada partió de la realización de encuestas de manera descriptiva, estudiando un grupo de individuos en un contexto natural, acudiendo a fuentes primarias. Esto se llevó a cabo en el Estado de Lagos, en Nigeria.

Los resultados apuntan a una evidencia de beneficios superiores de las empresas con marcas fuertes frente a los de sus competidores, ya que sus marcas son ampliamente conocidas y respetadas. Si los consumidores se sienten atraídos por la marca de una empresa y se asocian favorablemente con ella, esos clientes pueden convertirse en la clientela más lucrativa de la empresa.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Consumo; marca; marketing; publicidad.

1. Introduction

A strong brand enables a firm to differentiate itself from competitors (O'Cass & Grace 2012). Customers respect a strong brand since it mitigates risk and costs associated with search while also ensuring them of a particular degree of quality. Businesses that have a strong brand are less vulnerable to rival marketing methods, which results in greater profit margins, positive consumer reactions to pricing modifications, brand expansion prospects, and the establishment of long-term client loyalty and trust. It is generally believed by Brand Management scholars that a poor brand relationship will lead to a poor brand equity.

In a competitive market, the most important visitor is the customer, who must be served in the best way possible if a business is to grow and survive. Brands, like a company's goodwill, are intangible assets that play a major role in the market by assessing customers' needs and desires and providing them with something better than the competition. This is according to a recent study (Reddy & Kavitha, 2019).

Tocquer (2010) argues that marketing managers must be able to quantify the brand's equity. Luxury brands have historically has been related with upper-upper consumers who are willing to purchase goods or services that are above the lower income consumer. Moreover, as new technologies become available, luxury brands are becoming more visible and attracting the attention of shoppers worldwide (Kapferer&Michaut, 2015).

Brand relationships are qualitative in nature, and hence they may be classified into two types: exchange and communal (Clark and Mills, 2011). Consumer attitudes and behavior are influenced by interpersonal

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norms, which, according to Aggarwal (2004), are mimicked by the differences between these two kinds of connections.

A customer's capacity to recognise and/or recall the brand in diverse situations is referred to as brand awareness by Keller (2009). Brand awareness (BA) is one of the cofactor that will affect brand equity; it relates to customers' ability to remind, recognize, and be to relate with the brand (Huang & Sarigöllü, 2012). Customers' decision-making processes benefit from BA since recognized brands are much more prone to be shown in their consideration sets, hence broadening their options. Though brand awareness is a modest component of brand equity (Kelle and Brexendorf 2019), consumers who are aware make more rapid decisions than those who are unaware (Macdonald & Sharp, 2000). Then According to Macdonald & Sharp (2000), a high BA is advantageous since it encourages purchasing behavior. Hsu et al. (2011) found that BA improved brand selection, sales growth, retaining customers, and profitability (Stahl et al., 2012). A positive attitude and a high intention to buy may be achieved for the business by using BA to display brand commitment and urge potential customers to think about the brand before making a purchase (Erdem, Swait, & Valenzuela, 2006).

Brand Trust (BT) create an experience of safety while engaging with a brand, predicated on the expectation to assures customers of the brand's dependability and transparency. Other academics conceptualize BT as customers' willingness to trust a brand Mobimanet Shin et al. (2019). From BT's perspective, the brand is evaluated by means of consumer dependence on the brand, as well as its capabilities and intentions to honor consumer obligations.

Perceived quality (PQ) deals with the impression of a customer on a particular product in relations to intrinsic and extrinsic cue which are assumed to influence perceived quality of services brand generics as such it encouragement the brand relationship. according to (Shamindra Nath Sanyal and Saroj Kumar Datta 2011) PQ also brings about the knowledge assimilated towards their quality expectation. Research as shown that PQ only depends on intrinsic cues that increase brand equity and required marketing activities should be applied accordingly

The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of Service Brand Equity on the strength of Brand Relationships. Despite the fact that there have been quite a number of studies on service brand equity, there is limited focus on how it affects the strength of brand relationship of fast food which is obviously patronize by a larger population in developing economies. Because of this, this current study attempts to address the aforementioned gap by examining the impacts of services brand equity on brand relationship of tantalizer fast food business in Lagos Metropolis.

2. Objectives

The purpose of this study is to examine the link between service brand equity and brand strength.

The specific objectives are to:

1. To determine if brand awareness influences the customers' brand relationships with their favourite brands.
2. To determine if brand trust affects the customers' brand relationships with their favourite brands.

3. To examine the relationship between perceived quality and customers' brand relationships with their favourite brands.

The following research questions would be addressed by the study:

1. Does brand awareness influence customers' brand relationships with their favourite brands?
2. Does brand trust affect customers' brand relationships with their favourite brands?
3. What relationship exists between perceived quality and customers' brand relationships with their favourite brands?

The following research hypotheses would be addressed by the study:

- **H₀₁**: Brand awareness does not have a significant influence on customers' brand relationship with their favourite brands.
- **H₀₂**: There is no significant Effect of brand trust on customers' brand relationships with their favourite brands.
- **H₀₃**: There exists no relationship between perceived quality and customers' brand relationships with their favourite brands.

3. Literature review

3.1. Service Brand Equity

According to a study conducted in the South African fast food industry (Mackay & Johnson, 2017), service brand equity has an impact on the strength of a brand's relationship with customers. The study looked at the relationship between the brand equity and indicators of brand association, brand differentiation, perceived quality, and the strength of a brand's relationship with customers. The study use cross sectional and convince sample to carry out respondent survey.

Financial and consumer-based brand equity has been examined in the literature in regards to the formation of brand equity (Brahmbhatt & Shah 2017). The financial-based brand viewpoint highlights the importance of a brand's value and provides insight into how well a business will perform in a competitive market (Piercy and Lane 2010) as a results, the financial viewpoint allows businesses to deduct the brand's financial worth from the total value of the company.

When assessing brand equity, they consider the company's market worth. As an alternative to the purely commercial viewpoint that comes with brand ownership, a more customer-centric approach has emerged. It is the primary objective of the consumer-based strategy to identify how people respond to a particular brand (Srivastava and Ruekert, 1994).

A brand's equity acts as a connector between the brand and the consumer by cementing enduring bonds between the two parties. As Sadek and Mehelmi 2020 point out. When looking at the current literature on brand equity, it becomes clear that the term is defined and quantified in a variety of ways. Despite the fact that there is no commonly acknowledged definition of brand equity, it is usually accepted that it relates to the extra value that a brand delivers to a product or service. Using this value, the brand draws a link between its previous experiences and its hopes for the future (Keller, 2003).

The entire value that customers place on a brand is commonly used in marketing research to determine brand equity. According to the authors (Hsu, Hung and Tang, 2012).

But Keller (2008) stated that the aspects of brand equity include the prominence of brands, their performance and their image as well as the emotions associated with them, as well as the judgements and interactions people have with those brands. The intangible, changing character of service brands is another reason why customers judge service brands differently from non-service brand customers, according to He and Li (2011). A higher level of risk is connected with purchasing services because customers find it more difficult to evaluate them than non-services (Nath & Bawa 2011). Accordingly, it is important to effectively quantify brand equity so that marketing tactics may be developed that are consistent with the values of customers (Isberg and Pitta, 2013). As a result, the perceived risk is minimized by ascribing a brand to the service, which signals a 'promise' to the consumer, establishing confidence and trust (Mourad, Ennew & Kortam 2011). The characteristics of brand awareness, perceived quality, brand differentiation, brand associations, and brand trust were all incorporated into Kimpakorn and Tocquer's (2010) conceptual model for service brand equity.

3.1.1. Stylist Fact of Fast Food Industry in Nigeria

Nigeria's fast food sector has grown rapidly over the years and is expected to continue despite the country's changing habits and economic catastrophe. Nigerians are embracing the consumption of inexpensive, large-portioned and instant fast food. Despite the economic challenges Nigeria quick-service restaurants (QSR) are growing rapidly unlike other areas of wealth generation to the country. Nigeria's massive population, which is now ranked at over 170 million, makes the country unique in terms of long-term prospects. But investors under the (QSR) invest little on the business mean while they are making a huge profit on it. Industries are familiar with the following Challenges face by them: high cost of electricity, high cost of land, inexperience labours and importing inputs.

Reports from the Association of Fast Food and Confectioners of Nigeria say this (AFFCON). More than 500,000 people are employed at Nigeria's 800 QSR restaurants, which produce N200bn (\$1.22bn) in sales and employ 800 people. Research as shown that only three firms are the major industries that are dominating then: Mr. Bigg's, Tantalizers and Chiken Republic.

3.2. Brand Awareness

A client or potential customer's capacity to recall or be reminded of a brand is referred to as "brand awareness," according to Keller (2008). A strong brand image and long-term customer loyalty are the primary goals of brand equity, which can only be achieved by working together.

Brand recall is defined as customers' ability to recover the brand from memory when given the product category, the needs satisfied by the category, or a purchase or habit situation as a reminder, while brand recognition is defined as customers' ability to authenticate earlier revelations to the brand when given the brand as an indication (Keller, 2008).

3.3. Perceived Quality

The perceived quality is the opinion a customer has of the overall quality or image of a product, service, or brand about the purpose it is intended for as opposed to its alternatives. (MKA, 2019). Research suggests that reducing perceived risk increases the probability of purchase, therefore a decrease in perceived risk is useful for increasing customer trust (Snoj, Chen and Chang (2013). In a nutshell, perceived superiority refers to what consumers think about a product and how it compares to their expectations. (Asma and Moshmood,2015). Not only does service quality have a significant impact on business operations and profitability, but it also has a significant impact on customer happiness and loyalty (Malik et al., 2011). Customers perceive services in terms of complexity, according to Zeithaml et al. (2014). quality, as well as their overall satisfaction with the event. It is critical to comprehend what constitutes a management and marketing model while creating one. Customers are looking for and weighing options. The term "quality" refers to a subjective assessment of anything. When global greatness, supremacy, or an offer is no longer just an internal ambition (Zeithaml, Grönroos, 2009; Grönroos, 1988). Furthermore, service quality is multifaceted and difficult to [assess.be](#) assessed (Mangini et al., 2017).

3.4. Brand Differentiation

Differentiation is defined in marketing literature as having a unique attribute or product offering, in addition to strategy and industry. According to the research, distinctiveness support is an important aspect of brand strategy. Davcik and Rundquist(2012)describe differentiation as "developing distinctions to separate a company's offers to consumers from competitors," and they claim that differentiated companies have a stronger market orientation than cost leaders. Differentiation is also a more effective tactic than enhancing product quality. One of the three qualities of strong business brands, according to Balmer (2001), is differentiation. According to Centeno, Hart, and Dinnie (2013), differentiation is a major factor in brand growth.

In the minds of customers, brand differentiation is defined by Kimpakorn and Tocquer (2010) as the degree to which a brand is viewed as different from its competitors. Attributes, psychological or emotional advantages, and customer experience can all be used to generate differentiation. It can also be established with a distinct brand identity that contains a set of values, personality, traits, and promises that set the brand apart from its competitors. A firm's brand identity, corporate culture, and brand image must all be aligned to establish brand uniqueness, according to Kimpakorn and Tocquer (2010). In comparison to other brands, brand differentiation entails building a brand that is regarded to be unique and distinct (Davcik& Sharma, 2015).

3.5. Brand Association

Brand association is the picture that the brand pushes that is extraordinary to a brand. Association is assembled in view of their inclination and level of theoretical (keller, 2018). In the context of customer service, we regard any relationship that is linked to the administrative organization's image as a corporate-based affiliation. In administrations, the corporate-based connection is linked to the

company itself, making the company a brand for customers (Berry, 2020). A line marking is used in the hotel business while a corporation-level marking is used by financial institutions, however this relationship shifts throughout different help endeavors as marking techniques change (Devlin, 2014). Direct experience has a significant impact on the development of customer relationships, both in terms of what the brand stands for and the advantages that customers remember (Keller, 2003). As a result of favorable interactions with authorities, a company's long-term ties are more solid, allowing it to better differentiate its brand (Keller, 2003). An invaluable addition to mark knowledge and the basis for brand connection is the experience gained via preliminary and administrative relationships (Long-Tolbert et al, 2006: Smith and Swinyard, 2020). An evaluation of the impact of cell phone usage on brand value, utility, social value, and indulgent worth is conducted to explore the impact on brand associations, trust and dependability in the brand, usability or usefulness in the engagement impacts brand affiliations. This review epicurean value of the experience influences brand trust and brand adherence in a similar way to other use interactions. In administrations, brand connections are often preceded by considerable amounts of experience (Chernatory and Cotton, 2016; O'Loughin and Szmigin, 2005).) The mental and passionate cues that lead to mark attachments, referred to as "experience based affiliations," are also brought about by experience. As a result, consumers' experience-based affiliations are derived from the knowledge they gather during the assistance insight process (Barry et al, 2016).

3.6. Brand Trust

With brand trust, customers have confidence in the brand because they know the brand is dependable and accountable to their best interests (Delgado-ballester et al., 2003). A consumer's willingness to rely on a brand is the most common description, although it may also be defined as a consumer's willingness to rely on a brand (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Mobrmanetal, 1993). To understand why the brand is so reliant on its customers, one must look to the following examples: (Dalzeil et al., 2011; Delgado-ballestrand et al., 2001; Gurviez and Korchiy, 2002; Delgado-ballestrand et al., 2001). Expertise in meeting consumer expectations and fulfilling their wants, and constancy in transmitting esteem in all product phases, are two examples of the product's specialized character. Trust in a brand's ability to deliver on its promises is an important component of brand belief, and it has a substantial impact on brand loyalty (Sweeney and Swait, 2008). In order to build trust, you must have faith in your partner's complexity, legitimacy as well as constancy, and the belief that this is essential for a healthy relationship (Moorman et al., 1992, 1993). The strengthening of social and practical relationships is also a part of this (Garbarina and Johnson, 1999). Because it's presented as a long-term, personalized learning experience, it's easy to understand. The buyer's evaluation of the brand's immediate (preliminary and use) and indirect (advertising and word of mouth) influences this decision (Keller and Krishnan, 1996).

Brand insight was also examined in an analysis of mobile administrations by Brakus(2009) to see how it affects brand trust and how it relates to brand loyalty, with the latter being treated as a middleman. Loyalty was divided into two categories in this study: attitudinal loyalty and behavior loyalty. In contrast to other encounters, a tangible experience had the greatest influence on brand trust. Nonetheless, brand trust was obviously not a significant arbitrator between Experience and commitment (Hunag, 2017) Building and maintaining trust is important to the value of a brand since it is a necessary component of any successful relationship (Lazelere and Huston, 1980; Morgan and Hunt, 1994).

3.7. Customer Relationship Management

According to (Smit et al. 2007: 627), brand relationship is the process by which a consumer relates to or identifies with a brand. Profitable brand connections are frequently based on the establishment of brand meaning in the minds of customers - resulting in brand awareness, brand association, trust and image. Keller (2008) says. It's more likely that customers will strive to retain their relationship with a brand if they've had a positive experience with it. As a result, these customers are more likely to engage in activities such as word-of-mouth marketing, cross-purchasing, and staying strong in the face of bad news. According to marketers, building strong customer-brand connections helps them get new consumers, keep existing customers happy, improve the company's brand reputation, reduce marketing costs, and enhance revenues over time (Keller 2008; Smit et al., 2007; Sanz-Marcos, Jiménez-Marín & Elías-Zambrano, 2021).

3.8. Theory of Differentiation

The principle of differentiation is connected to the business environment. According to Porter (2007), differentiation theory is defined as "giving a great unique that is useful to the consumer further than merely offering a reduced price." The goal is to make the customer's experience as valuable as possible (Bonchek, 2012). When working with a brand, the customer should feel as if he or she is receiving additional value. Size, color, materials, and packaging are some physical product differentiating qualities. Because a consumer must have had a favorable experience with the brand in the past in order to recall and rank it as his or her top choice preference, the concept of uniqueness is linked to brand awareness, trust and loyalty.

4. Methodology

Surveys were conducted in a descriptive manner in this study. It is possible to study a group of people or things using descriptive survey research if data from a small number of individuals or items is collected and analyzed. For data gathering, questionnaires are used in these investigations. Because the study is conducted in a natural context, this design is deemed suitable. Primary sources were used by the researcher in this investigation, which was conducted in Lagos State. The questionnaire is the major source of data, and the study's population consists of all Tantalizer consumers in Somolu Lagos State. This study will use the Cochran formula, which is $n_0 = Z^2pq^2 = (0.81)^2(0.5)(0.5)$ $n_0 = (0.81)^2(0.5)(0.05)$ 100 people were surveyed, thus 2 people equals 100 people The research's 100 participants were selected through a series of rigorous selection processes that took place throughout the study region. There will be a survey administered to all participants, with the title "Effect of service brand equity on strength of brand relationship of Tantalizer fast food customer. Content validity and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient were tested once the questionnaire was designed. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 1.00 implies that the scale is entirely trustworthy, while a value of 0.7 is regarded the lowest cut-off point for acceptability (Pallant 2010). The aggregate mean score for the five aspects of service brand equity and the construct of brand connections could be determined after dependability was established.

5. Findings and discussion

- H_0 : Brand awareness does not have a significant influence on customers' brand relationship with their favourite brands

To test the hypothesis, linear regression analysis was used as specified in the regression model. Brand awareness (BA) formed the independent variable while brand relationship (BR) formed the dependent variable. The regression test results are presented in Table below.

Table 1a. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.591 ^a	.349	.341	.27306
a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Awareness				

Table 1b. Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.830	.343		11.170	.000
	Brand Awareness	.099	.100	.591	.990	.024
a. Dependent Variable: Brand Relationship						

The table shows R value of 0.591 indicates a moderately positive correlation between brand awareness and brand affinity. The table shows the level to which brand awareness explains the changes in brand relationship at Tantalizer Fast food. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.349$) indicates that brand awareness explains 34.9% of changes in brand relationship at Tantalizer Fast food. Because the p-value (0.024) is smaller than the 0.05 level of significance employed in the study, this finding is considered statistically significant. Because of this, the null hypothesis was deemed invalid. This suggests that Tantalizer Fast food's brand relationship is influenced by brand awareness.

Brand awareness (p 0.05) is statistically significant and may be used to predict brand relationships at fast food, as shown in the table above by an examination of the unstandardized coefficient of brand awareness (BA=0.099, p 0.05). Consequently, this shows that the hypothesis of the study has been disproven. This suggests that Tantalizer Fast food's brand relationship is influenced by brand awareness.

$$BR = 3.830 + 0.099BA$$

5.1. Analysis of Research Hypothesis Two

- H_0 : There is no significant Effect of brand trust on customers’ brand relationships with their favourite brands.

To test the hypothesis, linear regression analysis was used as specified in the regression model. The brand (BT) formed the independent variable while brand relationship (BR) formed the dependent variable. The regression test results are presented in Table below

Table 2a. Model Summary

Model 1	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.546 ^a	.298	.293	.25833

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Trust

Table 2b. Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.617	.228		11.494	.000
	Brand Trust	.248	.064	.546	3.865	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Relationship

The table shows R-squared value of 0.546 indicates a somewhat positive correlation between brand trust and brand connection. The table shows the level to which brand trust explains the changes in brand relationship at Tantalizer Fast food. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.298$) indicates that brand trust explains 29.8% of changes brand relationship at Tantalizer Fast food. Because the p-value (0.000) is less than the 0.05 level of significance employed in the study, this finding is considered statistically significant. In this way, the hypothesis of the study was ruled out of the running. This suggests that Tantalizer Fast food’s customers have a high level of brand trust in the company’s brand.

A look at Tantalizer Fast food’s coefficient table and its accompanying p-value demonstrates that the unstandardized coefficient of brand trust ($Bt= 0.248$) is statistically significant and may be used to predict brand trust at Tantalizer ($p 0.00$). As a result, the null hypothesis is further ruled out. This suggests that Tantalizer Fast food’s customers have a high level of brand trust in the company’s brand.

$$BR = 2.617 + 0.248BT$$

5.2. Analysis of Research Hypothesis Three

- H_0 : There exists no relationship between perceived quality and customers' brand relationships with their favourite brands

Table 3a. Model Summary

Model 1	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.427 ^a	.182	.175	.24795

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Quality

Table 3b. Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.416	.405		3.495	.001
	Perceived Quality	.587	.114	.427	5.129	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Relationship

The model summary table above demonstrates that there is a modest positive link between perceived quality and brand relationship ($R = 0.427$). The model further shows the extent to which perceived quality explains the changes in brand relationship at Tantalizer Fast food. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.182$) indicates that perceived quality explains 18.2% of changes brand relationship at Fast food. Because the p-value (0.000) is less than the 0.05 level of significance used in the study, this finding is considered statistically significant. Because of this, the null hypothesis was deemed to be false. This implies that perceived quality influences brand relationship at Tantalizer Fast food.

According to the data in the table, the unstandardized coefficient of perceived quality ($PQ = 0.587$, $p = 0.000$) is statistically significant and may be used to predict brand relationships at Tantalizer Fast food, as can be seen from the data in the table. As a result, this suggests that the null hypothesis has been rejected even further. At Tantalizer Fast food, the perceived quality has a significant impact on customer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

$$BR = 1.416 + 0.587PQ$$

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be assessed that profits for Tantalizer are likely to be higher than those of its competitors since their brands are widely known and respected. If consumers are drawn to and associated favourably with a company's brand, those customers may become the company's most

lucrative clientele. (Hopper, 2020). To gain and retain their position and perception in the market and to remain competitive in the long run, most businesses strive to provide the best possible service to their clients. According to (Bhasin, 2019). Maintaining and growing their client base is essential to tantalizer's long-term success, as is providing them with the high-quality items and services they've promised. Those findings are from (Juneja, 2015).

6.1. Recommendation

The findings support the importance of service brand equity as a determinant of brand relationship with the variables of brand equity (Brand trust, Brand association, perceived brand and customer services) in order to help organizations make more informed decisions that lead to better outcomes. The research will also benefit the services industry's practice. It forces service businesses to reconsider their concentration on competitive and meta-advantage. Because competitive advantage might fade away at any time, Meta advantage will continue to provide the company with knowledge and technology in the twenty-first century in order to prioritize, allocate resources, and budget.

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