

ORIGINAL PAPER

Innovative Strategies in the Marketing Mix to Enhance Health and Wellness Tourism Satisfaction: A Case Study of Thailand's Digital Competitive Edge

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Abstract: This study examines the correlation between the marketing mix (7Ps) and consumer satisfaction within the health and wellness tourism sector, with an emphasis on Thailand as a worldwide frontrunner. Furthermore, this study also explores innovative strategies such as digital health integration, AI-driven personalization, and sustainable wellness solutions to enhance Thailand's competitive advantage in the health tourism industry. Data from 400 respondents indicate that People, Place, and Product are the most influential aspects, although Process and Physical Evidence also considerably affect satisfaction. Despite Price's limited impact, effective Promotion via digital media amplifies engagement. The regression model accounts for 67% of the variance in satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.67$, $p < 0.001$). The results underscore the necessity for superior service quality, cultural integration, and digital innovation to enhance Thailand's competitive advantage and foster sustainable growth in health tourism. Subsequent study ought to investigate the impact of demographic factors and technology innovations on customer choices.

Keywords: Health and Wellness Tourism, Marketing Mix (7Ps), Customer Satisfaction

1. Introduction

In contemporary society, as individuals prioritize health and fitness, health tourism has emerged as a prevalent option. Travelers are increasingly pursuing health tourism, which has become one of the fastest-growing worldwide industries, driven by heightened awareness of health and self-care among the populace. This phenomenon is underpinned by heightened awareness of self-care, preventive health measures, and the pursuit of overall well-being (World Health Organization [WHO], 2023).

Health tourism worldwide includes a diverse range of services, encompassing medical and health treatments and wellness activities such as spas, yoga, nutritional meals, and individualized care. The global health tourism industry was valued at around USD 630 billion in 2023 and is anticipated to increase at an average annual rate of 7.3%, reaching an estimated USD 8.9 trillion by 2028 (Global Wellness Institute [GWI], 2023). This exponential rise illustrates the sector's capacity to profoundly influence the global economy (United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2023).

Thailand is distinctly situated as a global frontrunner in health tourism. The country, characterized by its ample natural resources, globally acknowledged healthcare standards, and cost-effectiveness, has consistently been a favored locale for health tourists (Ministry of Public Health Thailand, 2019). In 2019, before the onset of the COVID-19 epidemic, Thailand attracted over 12.5 million health tourists, resulting in revenue surpassing 409 billion baht and the creation of over 530,000 jobs (Bangkok Bank, 2022). This strong performance is additionally bolstered by Thailand's strategic emphasis on innovation and value-oriented economic transformation through the Thailand 4.0 national development strategy, which designates health tourism as one of the 12 targeted S-Curve industries (Government of Thailand, 2021).

As the global population ages, the need for health and wellness services is increasing. The United Nations indicates that by 2050, 22% of the global population will be aged 60 or older, while Thailand is projected to attain a comparable rate of 38.3% (United Nations, 2023). This demographic transition underscores the increasing significance of health tourism services customized for older passengers, presenting new chances for Thailand to enhance its status as a premier destination (Global Wellness Institute, 2023).

Thailand must confront significant obstacles to sustain its competitive advantage in the health tourism industry, despite its promise. Consumer behavior is transforming, influenced by elements such as personalization, service excellence, cultural norms, and technological progress (McKinsey & Company, 2022). Comprehending these factors is essential for customizing services and enhancing the marketing mix to address the varied requirements of health tourists. Furthermore, with the rise of digital transformation, AI-driven personalization, and sustainability trends, innovation plays a critical role in redefining Thailand's position as a leading health and wellness tourism destination. Therefore, this study aims to examine consumer behavior patterns, concentrating on the motivations and preferences of health tourists, and to identify service components within the marketing mix (7Ps) that substantially influence satisfaction and loyalty. This research seeks to improve Thailand's competitiveness in the global health tourism market by offering creative tactics that correspond with consumer wants, hence promoting sustainable growth and addressing increasing market expectations

1.1 Healthcare and Wellness in Tourism

The worldwide health tourism sector has undergone significant expansion in recent years, propelled by reasons including aging demographics, heightened health consciousness,

and increasing disposable incomes. This article examines the rising trends influencing this business, such as the incorporation of digital health technologies, customized wellness experiences, and a transition towards wellness and preventive treatment. The focus on innovation and value-driven economic development in nations such as Thailand is examined, underscoring their status as premier health tourism destinations.

The global health tourism industry has experienced substantial expansion, estimated at around USD 630 billion in 2023, with an anticipated annual growth rate of 7.3%, projected to elevate the market size to USD 8.9 trillion by 2028 (Yeoh et al., 2013; Global Wellness Institute, 2023). This expansion is propelled by multiple factors, such as aging demographics, heightened health consciousness, and escalating disposable expenditures, especially in emerging nations (Johnston et al., 2010). Similarly, the worldwide wellness tourism market is projected to expand substantially, reaching an estimated value of USD 817 billion by 2026 and increasing to USD 1.3 trillion by 2030. This growth trajectory is ascribed to consumers emphasizing holistic health and well-being, coupled with advancements in wellness technologies and new service providers.

Health tourism is a diverse sector that incorporates health and wellness services aimed at enhancing physical, mental, and emotional well-being. It has two basic components: medical tourism, which focuses on treatments such as surgeries and advanced medical procedures, and wellness tourism, which stresses preventative health measures including spa therapies, yoga, and individualized dietary regimens (Connell, 2013; Smith & Puczkó, 2014). Additionally, there is an increasing focus on wellness and preventive care, as individuals pursue not only medical treatments but also comprehensive wellness programs and preventative healthcare options. Personalized medicine is gaining prominence,

as advancements in genetic testing and diagnostic tools facilitate treatment approaches customized to individual requirements and genetic profiles. Moreover, emerging trends such as AI-driven personalization, blockchain for medical records, and metaverse-based wellness retreats are reshaping health tourism. Thailand must integrate these technologies to maintain its global competitiveness. The evolution of the health tourism industry has been characterized by the following trends:

1) Integration of Digital Health: Tools

The integration of digital health technology, such as wearable devices, health monitoring software, and telemedicine platforms, has transformed access to healthcare services. These solutions augment the accuracy of health monitoring and facilitate the convenience of health consultations, providing travelers with a seamless healthcare experience. One key trend is the increasing integration of telemedicine and digital health platforms, allowing patients to consult with healthcare professionals remotely before and after their medical trips (Menvielle et al., 2014). This integration enhances service accessibility and ensures continuity of care for international patients.

2) Personalized Wellness Experiences:

An increasing number of health travelers pursue personalized wellness programs designed to meet their specific requirements. Examples encompass nutrition recommendations derived from genetic testing and rehabilitation programs tailored to specific health objectives. This trend underscores the significance of personalization in the provision of health and wellness services. Travelers are pursuing customized experiences that include holistic methods, including mindfulness retreats, detoxification programs, and therapeutic diets, alongside conventional medical treatment (Smith & Puczkó, 2014). The emergence of wearable health technologies, like fitness trackers and health monitoring devices, enhances customization by delivering real-time data to users and doctors (Chen & Flood, 2013).

3) Focus on Preventive Care: The sector has experienced a notable transition from curative to preventative healthcare. Wellness tourism increasingly prioritizes activities and programs that enhance long-term well-being,

including yoga, meditation, stress reduction courses, and nutritional advice. This proactive health strategy mirrors evolving consumer desires. A notable shift has transpired in the health tourism business, transitioning focus from curative to preventive healthcare. Wellness tourism increasingly advocates for activities and programs designed to improve long-term well-being, including yoga, meditation, stress reduction classes, and nutritional guidance. Recent studies emphasize the significance of preventive treatment in fulfilling consumer expectations for proactive health management (Johnston et al., 2020). Research indicates that tourists favor areas that provide preventative care choices, reflecting an increasing awareness of health and wellness (Chen et al., 2021). Furthermore, the implementation of preventive programs promotes a proactive healthcare strategy, decreasing future medical expenses and enhancing quality of life (Lunt et al., 2021).

4) Cultural and Wellness Integration:

Modern health tourism often integrates cultural immersion with wellness pursuits, providing guests a unique and fulfilling experience. Conventional herbal spa therapies, native medicinal practices, and seminars on health-focused regional cuisines are gaining popularity among health tourists. Destinations like Thailand integrate Thai massage and herbal therapies, grounded in centuries-old traditions, into contemporary wellness programs (Rittichainuwat et al., 2018). Likewise, Ayurvedic treatments in India and balneotherapy in Eastern Europe draw travelers pursuing culturally immersed wellness experiences (Smith & Puczkó, 2014). Studies demonstrate that including cultural components into wellness services boosts consumer happiness, preserves traditional practices, and benefits local communities (Chen et al., 2021; Heung et al., 2011). Moreover, the incorporation of cultural wellness components cultivates stronger bonds between travelers and host locations, encouraging return visits and generating word-of-mouth referrals (Lunt et al., 2021).

1.2 Consumer Behavior in Health Tourism

The motivations and choices of health tourists are influenced by factors including cost, service

quality, and availability of natural resources. Tourists frequently like destinations that offer a combination of superior services and affordability, rendering countries such as Thailand, India, and Hungary popular selections (Chen et al., 2021). Moreover, the demand for customized wellness services, including bespoke spa treatments and specific dietary programs, has markedly increased, corresponding with customer expectations for distinctive and transformative experiences (Smith & Puczkó, 2014). Locations featuring unspoiled natural habitats, including thermal springs or tropical locales, are pivotal in drawing health tourists (Johnston et al., 2020).

Lunt et al. (2021) found that demographic variables such as age, income, culture, and lifestyle substantially impact customer behavior in health tourism. Older persons, representing an expanding portion of the global population, frequently choose preventative health and wellness services to sustain their quality of life. Affluent persons are more inclined to seek luxury wellness vacations, whereas middle-income consumers emphasize price without sacrificing quality (Chen et al., 2021). Cultural background influences preferences, as Asian visitors tend to choose traditional techniques such as acupuncture and Ayurveda, while Western tourists may favor mindfulness and detox programs (Rittichainuwat et al., 2018).

Health tourists generally expend more sums than ordinary travelers, motivated by the specialist nature of health and wellness services. International health tourists expend, on average, 41% more per capita than ordinary tourists, although domestic health tourists frequently surpass their counterparts by as much as 175% (Johnston et al., 2020). This increased expenditure signifies the value attributed to superior healthcare, cutting-edge health and wellness technologies, and customized wellness initiatives (Abdul et al., 2023). Moreover, Chen et al. (2021) found that the decision-making process for health tourists encompasses multiple

stages, including information retrieval, alternative assessment, and ultimate selection. Online evaluations, personal recommendations, and the certification of healthcare facilities are critical determinants in the selection of destinations (Chen et al., 2021). Tourists evaluate the thoroughness of service packages, closeness to natural attractions, and cultural alignment prior to making a selection (Lunt et al., 2021). Digital channels, such as social media and healthcare tourism websites, play a vital role in influencing consumer decisions by offering accessible and transparent information.

1.3 Marketing Mix in Health Tourism

The marketing mix framework, which consists of seven Ps, including product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence, provides a comprehensive and strategic approach to establishing and optimizing health tourism services. This paradigm has become increasingly important in the fast-expanding and competitive health tourism business, where destinations compete to attract foreign patients looking for high-quality health care and wellness combined with travel experiences.

Every component of the 7Ps is essential in influencing consumer happiness and enhancing the overall success of health tourism destinations. By meticulously evaluating and incorporating these components, health tourism operators can develop a comprehensive and attractive proposition that addresses the varied requirements of the tourists. The framework facilitates a methodical approach to tackling essential components of the health tourism experience, encompassing the quality of health services and the comprehensive trip.

1.4 Product

The primary offerings in health tourism encompass treatments or wellness programs, and spa services. A product's allure encompasses not just its fundamental features but also its

quality, personalization, and supplementary services that fulfill consumer demands. In health tourism, the 'Product' refers to the services offered, such as medical procedures, wellness treatments, and rehabilitation programs. However, the product extends beyond these core offerings to include ancillary services that enrich the customer experience, such as concierge support, luxury accommodations, and cultural immersion activities. Smith and Puczkó (2020) assert that health tourism offerings must cater to the physical and emotional requirements of travelers. Their research indicates that the incorporation of traditional and contemporary service within health tourism services can accommodate a wider array of clientele.

According to Mamak and Chairatana (2023), a study conducted in Hua Hin District, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, Thailand, emphasized the importance of studying tourist behaviors and preferences when developing health tourism products. This research suggests that understanding the specific needs and expectations of the tourists is crucial for creating effective product offerings. Additionally, the incorporation of wellness programs, including yoga retreats, mental health therapies, and anti-aging treatments, has been identified as an emerging trend (Heung et al., 2021). These initiatives not only expand the product line but also address a worldwide desire for comprehensive health experiences. The personalization of health care according to demographic and cultural preferences increases the perceived value of the product (Hudson & Thal, 2021). Additionally, in the context of health and wellness tourism, the 'Product' encompasses services like medical treatments, spa therapies, and wellness programs. Integrating digital innovations such as telemedicine consultations, virtual reality (VR) wellness experiences, and personalized health apps can enhance service offerings. For instance, VR can provide virtual tours of wellness facilities, allowing potential tourists to experience services before booking. Personalized health apps can offer tailored wellness plans, track

health metrics, and provide recommendations, thereby adding value to the core product.

1.5 Price

Pricing in health tourism is a complicated notion that encompasses more than just monetary value. It represents value, affordability, and competitiveness. Pricing plans must take into account operational costs, target market purchasing power, and worldwide competitiveness. Ravangard et al. (2020) discovered that open and fair pricing is critical in establishing confidence with health tourists. Furthermore, bundled packages that include hotels, medical treatments, and tourism activities are extensively used to increase perceived value and simplify the decision-making process for consumers (Peng & Boonyanmethaporn, 2021). Gretzel et al. (2020) propose that bundled pricing—integrating healthcare services with accommodations and local excursions—augments perceived value and streamlines the decision-making process for visitors.

1.6 Place

The 'Place' element of the marketing mix highlights the physical and virtual availability of health tourism services. The geographical location is a crucial factor influencing success in this industry. Locations renowned for their scenic beauty, cultural legacy, and sophisticated healthcare systems frequently draw a greater proportion of health tourists (Chon & Singh, 2020). Place also known as distribution channel is also essential.

Place aspect focuses on how services are delivered to customers. Digital innovations have expanded this beyond physical locations. Online platforms and mobile applications allow customers to book services remotely, access virtual wellness sessions, or consult with health professionals via telehealth services. This digital accessibility makes it convenient for international tourists to plan and customize their wellness journeys in

Thailand. Hudson and Thal (2021) emphasize the significance of incorporating online platforms into health tourism programs. Telemedicine services, online scheduling systems, and digital marketing initiatives broaden the accessibility of providers to global audiences.

Collaborations with intermediaries, like travel agencies and insurance firms, augment service accessibility. Heung et al. (2021) assert that local collaborations with hotels, transportation services, and tour operators are essential for providing a cohesive experience for health tourists from arrival to departure. These distribution tactics enhance convenience while cultivating trust and loyalty among consumers.

1.7 Promotion

Effective promotional methods are crucial for enhancing awareness and stimulating demand in health tourism. Advertising campaigns, public relations strategies, and internet marketing activities are frequently utilized to emphasize the distinctive advantages of health tourism services. Social media has become an exceptionally potent instrument for promotion. Gretzel et al. (2020) observe that platforms like Instagram and YouTube enable health tourism providers to display success narratives, testimonials, and behind-the-scenes insights of their facilities. This visual storytelling engages audiences and establishes emotional ties with prospective clients. Furthermore, Smith and Puczkó (2020) underscore the significance of narrative in marketing strategy. Digital marketing strategies are crucial in promoting health and wellness tourism. Utilizing social media campaigns, search engine optimization (SEO), content marketing, and influencer partnerships can increase visibility. Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) can create immersive promotional materials, allowing potential tourists to experience a 'virtual taste' of the services offered. For example, a VR tour of a spa facility can entice potential customers by providing a realistic preview of the experience.

Emphasizing patient experiences and success narratives not only personalizes the brand but also fosters trust and credibility. Moreover, personalized marketing, including customized email campaigns and targeted advertisements, guarantees that promotional initiatives engage the appropriate audience, hence improving conversion rates.

1.8 People

The quality of staff in health tourism is a determining element in customer or patient happiness, and plays a significant role in service delivery and patient satisfaction. Medical professionals, administrative workers, tour guides, and customer service representatives are all part of the 'People' element that is in shaping tourists' perceptions and overall satisfaction with health tourism experiences. According to Hudson and Thal (2021), well-trained, sympathetic, and culturally aware employees are critical to providing a positive customer experience. To satisfy the different demands of foreign health tourists, training programs that emphasize on language skills, intercultural competence, and emotional intelligence are strongly suggested. Additionally, leveraging AI-powered chatbots on websites and apps can provide 24/7 customer support, answering queries, and assisting with bookings, thereby improving customer satisfaction.

1.9 Process

The process component in health tourism encompasses all procedures and actions involved in service delivery, from patient registration to discharge. Effective process management is crucial for ensuring a seamless and satisfactory experience for the tourists. The significance of process in health tourism marketing is further underscored by a study on the marketing model of health tourism in Tehran (Bagheri et al., 2023). This research identified preventive processes as a key component of the mixed marketing elements essential for

developing health tourism. The research indicates that effectively structured processes can improve the overall quality of healthcare services and increase the appeal of a location for health tourists. Streamlining processes through digital solutions can improve efficiency and customer satisfaction. Implementing online booking systems, electronic health records, and automated feedback collection are examples. This encompasses optimizing administrative processes, minimizing wait times, and facilitating transparent communication throughout the patient experience. Furthermore, innovative solutions like smart wearables, AI-driven health monitoring, and virtual wellness consultations can significantly improve service efficiency and personalization in health tourism.

1.10 Physical Evidence

The tangible aspects of service delivery, such as the appearance of facilities, cleanliness, and available amenities, play a critical role in shaping customer perceptions. Ravangard et al. (2020) discovered that contemporary, well-maintained facilities equipped with cutting-edge medical technology substantially improve the reputation of health tourism providers. Moreover, the physical surroundings must foster a sense of ease and tranquility. Smith and Puczkó (2020) emphasize the significance of integrating natural elements, like vegetation and aquatic features, into facility design to foster a therapeutic environment. Furthermore, visual branding, encompassing logos, uniforms, and marketing materials, significantly influences the overall perception of professionalism and trustworthiness. Moreover, the quality of supplementary services, such as dining service, recreational activities, and transportation options, can enhance the client experience and distinguish a provider from its rivals (Heung et al., 2021).

2. Materials and Methods

The research design is drawn from quantitative research methodology. The survey is used to establish a baseline on the study of the tourists'

consumer behavior toward health and wellness tourism services in Thailand. The research design incorporates surveys to collect baseline data on consumer attitudes, motivations, and decision-making factors. A total of 400 respondents (voluntary and anonymous) participated in the survey, with all participants being voluntary and assured of anonymity to uphold ethical research standards. To establish the reliability of standardized tests, Cronbach's alpha coefficient is used to analyze all the scores on individual items, and all aspects are met at the 0.7 level. Descriptive statistics, frequency distributions, percentages, and means are used to describe and report the information collected affecting individual variables and demographic information. The multiple regression is used to predict the specific behaviors, such as the likelihood of choosing a particular health and wellness service based on marketing mix factors including product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence.

3. Results

A total of 400 usable questionnaires are obtained. The distribution of usable responses by gender consists of 180 males (45%) and 220 females (55%). The respondents reported their age to be below 30; 55 (13.75%) between 30-40; 72 (18%), respondents reported their age to be between 41-50; 85 (21.25%), respondents reported their age to be between 51-60; 95 (23.75%), respondents reported their age to be between 61-70; 65 (16.25%), and respondents reported their age to be over 70; 28 (7%).

The survey results indicate a diverse range of purposes among health tourists. The majority, 193 respondents (48.25%), travel for wellness and relaxation, reflecting the growing trend of seeking rejuvenation through spa treatments, yoga, and holistic wellness programs. A significant portion, 137 respondents (34.25%), focus on medical treatments, such as surgeries or advanced healthcare services, highlighting the importance of Thailand's reputation for high-quality, cost-

effective medical care. Meanwhile, 70 respondents (17.5%) prioritize preventive health, including programs for lifestyle management and early health monitoring, showcasing a proactive approach to maintaining well-being. These findings emphasize the varied motivations driving health tourism in Thailand.

Breaking down to the detailed distribution offers a comprehensive purpose of spending for different types of health tourism services. Medical treatment spending among respondents shows a balanced distribution across various ranges. A small group of 5 respondents (3.65%) reported spending below 1,000 THB, while 12 respondents (8.76%) spent between 1,000 and 3,000 THB. The majority of respondents, 35 (25.55%), spent between 5,001 and 10,000 THB, followed closely by 40 respondents (29.20%) in the 10,001 to 20,000 THB range. Spending above 20,000 THB was reported by 23 respondents (18.24%), highlighting the significance of high-end services in medical tourism. These findings reflect the diverse affordability levels and service needs within the medical tourism sector.

Spending on wellness and relaxation services is concentrated in the lower ranges, indicating accessibility for a broad audience. A notable 18 respondents (9.47%) spent below 1,000 THB, while the largest group, 50 respondents (26.32%), spent between 1,000 and 3,000 THB. Additionally, 65 respondents (34.21%) reported spending between 3,001 and 5,000 THB. A smaller proportion, 30 respondents (15.79%), spent between 5,001 and 10,000 THB, while 22 respondents (11.58%) reported spending between 10,001 and 20,000 THB. Only 5 respondents (2.63%) spent above 20,000 THB, emphasizing that wellness tourism generally caters to those seeking cost-effective relaxation and rejuvenation services.

Spending patterns for preventive health services show a heavier emphasis on higher spending ranges, reflecting the value placed on proactive

health measures. Only 5 respondents (7.14%) reported spending below 1,000 THB, while 7 respondents (10%) spent between 1,000 and 3,000 THB. Another 5 respondents (7.14%) spent between 3,001 and 5,000 THB, and 8 respondents (11.43%) spent between 5,001 and 10,000 THB. The majority, 30 respondents (42.86%), spent between 10,001 and 20,000 THB, with 15 respondents (21.43%) reporting spending above 20,000 THB. These findings underline the premium nature of preventive health services, which often require personalized and specialized programs.

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Table 3 shows the respondents are asked about their overall marketing mix elements and customer satisfaction of health and wellness tourism experience regarding the customer purchase decision-making through the service. The most frequency endorsed responses is people (mean = 4.49), followed by place (mean = 4.31), product (mean = 4.22), process (mean = 4.21), physical evidence (mean = 4.11), promotion (mean = 4.01), and price (mean = 3.97).

Table 4 presents the regression analysis results examining the relationship between the 7Ps of marketing mix (independent variables) and

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	180	45.0
	Female	220	55.0
Age	Below 30	55	13.75
	30 – 40	72	18.0
	41 – 50	85	21.25
	51 – 60	95	23.75
	61 – 70	65	16.25
	Over 70	28	7
Main Purposes	Medical Treatment	193	48.25
	Wellness and Relaxation	137	34.25
	Preventive Care	70	17.5

Table 2: Spending Ranges Breaking Down by Main Purposes

Main Purposes	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Medical Treatment	Below 1,000	5	3.65
	1,000 – 3,000	12	8.76
	3,001 – 5,000	20	14.60
	5,001 – 10,000	35	25.55
	10,001 – 20,000	40	29.20
	Over 20,000	23	18.24
Wellness and Relaxation	Below 1,000	18	9.47
	1,000 – 3,000	50	26.32
	3,001 – 5,000	65	34.21
	5,001 – 10,000	30	15.79
	10,001 – 20,000	22	11.58
	Over 20,000	5	2.63
Preventive Care	Below 1,000	5	7.14
	1,000 – 3,000	7	10.0
	3,001 – 5,000	5	7.14
	5,001 – 10,000	8	11.43
	10,001 – 20,000	30	42.86
	Over 20,000	15	21.43

Table 3 The Mean for Marketing Mix and Overall Satisfaction

Factors	Overall Mean	SD.	Ranking
Product	4.22	0.58	3
Price	3.97	0.60	7
Place	4.31	0.56	2
Promotion	4.01	0.56	6
People	4.49	0.64	1
Process	4.21	0.69	4
Physical Evidence	4.11	0.52	5
Satisfaction	4.31	0.55	

satisfaction with health and wellness tourism services (dependent variable). The findings reveal the following insights:

1) Significant Predictors:

- People ($b = 0.50$, $\beta = 0.42$, $t = 6.84$, $p = 0.000$): This is the most influential factor, indicating that improvements in staff quality, cultural awareness, and emotional intelligence contribute significantly to higher customer satisfaction.
- Place ($b = 0.40$, $\beta = 0.32$, $t = 5.12$, $p = 0.000$): The availability of health services in convenient and appealing locations strongly impacts satisfaction.
- Product ($b = 0.35$, $\beta = 0.28$, $t = 4.21$, $p = 0.000$): High-quality health tourism offerings, including treatments and wellness programs, also play a critical role.

2) Moderately Significant Predictors:

- Process ($b = 0.27$, $\beta = 0.24$, $t = 3.41$, $p = 0.001$): Effective service delivery processes positively affect satisfaction.
- Physical Evidence ($b = 0.30$, $\beta = 0.26$, $t = 3.78$, $p = 0.000$): The physical

environment, cleanliness, and facilities enhance perceptions of quality.

3) A Least Significant Predictor:

- Price ($b = 0.22$, $\beta = 0.19$, $t = 2.89$, $p = 0.004$): While important, price has a smaller impact compared to other factors, suggesting that health tourists are willing to pay for value-added services.
- Promotion ($b = 0.18$, $\beta = 0.15$, $t = 2.35$, $p = 0.020$): Marketing efforts like social media and personalized campaigns show a significant but smaller effect.

The regression model explains 67% of the variance in satisfaction, as indicated by $R^2 = 0.67$. This suggests a strong relationship between the 7Ps and customer satisfaction. Additionally, the overall model is statistically significant ($F = 52.38$, $p = 0.000$).

Health and Wellness Tourism Satisfaction = $1.25 + 0.35$ (Product) + 0.22 (Price) + 0.40 (Place) + 0.18 (Promotion) + 0.50 (People) + 0.27 (Process) + 0.30 (Physical Evidence)

Table 4 The Relationship between Marketing Mix and Health and Wellness Tourism Satisfaction

The Relationship between Marketing Mix and Street Food Experience	Regression Coefficient (b)	Standardized Coefficient (β)	t	P
Product	0.35	0.28	4.21	0.000**
Price	0.22	0.19	2.89	0.004**
Place	0.40	0.32	5.12	0.000**
Promotion	0.18	0.15	2.35	0.020*
People	0.50	0.42	6.84	0.000**
Process	0.27	0.24	3.41	0.001**
Physical Evident	0.30	0.26	3.78	0.000**
Constant (a)	1.25			
R = 0.82, R² = 0.67, F = 52.38, P = 0.000				

*P < 0.05

**P < 0.01

4. Discussion and conclusions

The findings from this study align with previous research and reinforce the critical

role of the marketing mix in shaping customer satisfaction within the health and wellness tourism sector. As highlighted by Hudson and Thal (2021), the People dimension consistently emerges as the most influential factor in service industries. This study's findings ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$, $\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$) further validate this, demonstrating

that staff empathy, cultural competence, and professionalism are key determinants of customer satisfaction. Similarly, Heung et al. (2011) emphasize that staff training programs, especially those focused on language skills and emotional intelligence, are essential for delivering exceptional service in international health tourism settings.

The role of Place ($\beta = 0.32$, $p < 0.001$, $\beta = 0.32$, $p < 0.001$) corroborates findings by Chen et al. (2021), who highlighted that the location of health and wellness facilities significantly impacts tourist behavior. In line with Thailand's competitive advantage as a health tourism hub, destinations with appealing natural and cultural environments, such as spa retreats in Chiang Mai or beachfront wellness resorts in Phuket, enhance the overall experience. This is supported by Rittichainuwat et al. (2018), who noted that integrating cultural elements, such as traditional Thai massage or herbal therapies, not only boosts customer satisfaction but also encourages repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth marketing.

Product, the third most influential factor ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.001$, $\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.001$), reflects the growing importance of personalized and innovative wellness services. This aligns with the observations of Smith and Puczkó (2014), who emphasized that customers increasingly value tailored wellness experiences, such as detox programs, genetic-based nutritional plans, and mindfulness retreats. Providers who focus on customization and innovation in their product offerings are better positioned to meet the evolving expectations of health tourists, as also noted by Johnston et al. (2020).

While Price ($\beta = 0.19$, $p = 0.004$, $\beta = 0.19$, $p = 0.004$) showed a statistically significant but lower impact, this is consistent with studies by Connell (2013) and Yeoh et al. (2013), who

found that customers in health tourism prioritize quality and value over cost. Thailand's relatively affordable healthcare services, combined with high standards of care, position it favorably in the global market. Transparent pricing strategies and bundled service packages, as suggested by Ravangard et al. (2020), can further enhance perceived value and reduce price sensitivity among health tourists.

The importance of Promotion ($\beta = 0.15$, $p = 0.020$, $\beta = 0.15$, $p = 0.020$) is highlighted in previous research by Gretzel et al. (2020), who emphasized the power of digital marketing, particularly social media platforms like Instagram and YouTube, in showcasing success stories and customer testimonials. This study supports the idea that effective promotional strategies, including personalized email campaigns and visually engaging content, can influence customer perceptions and drive satisfaction. Moreover, the integration of AI-powered chatbots, VR-based promotional experiences, and immersive storytelling through AR can enhance customer engagement and influence health tourism decisions.

The Process ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.001$, $\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.001$) and Physical Evidence ($\beta = 0.26$, $p < 0.001$, $\beta = 0.26$, $p < 0.001$) dimensions align with findings by Ravangard et al. (2020), who identified seamless service delivery and well-maintained facilities as critical to customer satisfaction in health tourism. Efficient administrative processes, such as easy booking systems and clear communication, enhance trust and confidence among health tourists. Furthermore, Ravangard et al. (2020) emphasized that clean, modern facilities equipped with state-of-the-art technology contribute to a sense of professionalism and reliability. In addition, the use of smart wellness infrastructure, eco-friendly designs, and digital health hubs can improve customer satisfaction and position Thailand as a futuristic health tourism leader.

4.1 The Implication

The findings contribute to the existing body of literature by reaffirming the importance of the 7Ps in driving satisfaction within the health and wellness tourism industry. They provide actionable insights for health tourism providers to prioritize key factors such as staff training, location selection, and personalized service offerings. By aligning with global trends, as suggested by the Global Wellness Institute (2023), Thailand can further enhance its positioning as a leading health tourism destination. Moreover, this study provides actionable insights for health and wellness tourism providers, policymakers, and marketers. It highlights the critical areas where investments and improvements can drive customer satisfaction and loyalty. By focusing on the most impactful dimensions—People, Place, and Product—Thailand's health tourism sector can maintain its competitive edge and achieve sustainable growth. Additionally, the findings reinforce the importance of integrating cultural elements, leveraging digital tools, and maintaining high service quality standards. These strategies not only enhance the customer experience but also contribute to Thailand's positioning as a global leader in health and wellness tourism.

People emerged as the most influential factor, reflecting the critical importance of human interactions in service-oriented industries. This underscores the need for well-trained staff who are empathetic, culturally sensitive, and capable of delivering exceptional customer service. Furthermore, investing in staff training and development programs should be a strategic priority for health tourism providers.

Place highlights the importance of strategic location in the success of health and wellness tourism. Customers value destinations that offer not only convenience but also an appealing natural and cultural environment. For Thailand, leveraging its natural resources and cultural heritage, such as traditional Thai massage and

herbal therapies, provides a competitive edge. Tourism providers should focus on enhancing accessibility and integrating local cultural elements to create a unique and immersive experience.

Product also plays a vital role, indicating that the quality and variety of services—ranging from medical treatments to wellness programs—are essential for customer satisfaction. The increasing demand for personalized wellness services, as seen in global trends, suggests that providers should emphasize customization and innovation in their offerings to meet diverse customer needs.

In addition, the Process and Physical Evidence underline the importance of seamless service delivery and well-maintained facilities. Efficient booking systems, minimal waiting times, and clean, well-designed spaces enhance the overall customer experience and satisfaction. These factors are particularly critical in health and wellness tourism, where trust and comfort are key.

Interestingly, while Price was the lowest relative impact among the 7Ps. This suggests that customers are willing to pay a premium for high-quality health and wellness services. Providers should focus on delivering value rather than competing solely on cost. Transparent pricing, bundled packages, and highlighting the value-added components of their services can help mitigate price sensitivity. Furthermore, Promotion is emphasizing the need for effective marketing strategies. Digital channels, particularly social media, play a crucial role in influencing customer decisions. Providers should invest in storytelling, testimonials, and visual marketing to showcase their unique strengths and build trust among potential customers.

Additionally, this study highlights the interconnected nature of the marketing mix elements and the need for a holistic approach to service delivery. For policymakers and practitioners, the findings underscore the

importance of continuous innovation and strategic investments in infrastructure, staff development, and digital marketing. These strategies not only enhance customer satisfaction but also contribute to the sustainable growth of the health tourism sector. Future studies could explore the moderating effects of demographic factors, such as age or nationality, on the relationship between the marketing mix and satisfaction. This would provide deeper insights into how different customer segments perceive and value health tourism services.

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