

## Marketing Mix Factors Affecting Customers' Decision Making on Purchasing Spa Services in Phranakhon Sri Ayuthaya Province

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### Abstract

The objectives of this research were to 1) study levels of marketing mix factors and customers' decision making on purchasing spa services in Phranakhon Sri Ayuthaya Province, 2) study relationship among the marketing mix factors and customers' decision and 3) identify the affect of the related marketing mix factors on the customers' decision. The target population were 660 customers of the spa shops during July–October 2022. 200 customers were selected as the samples by means of accidental sampling technique. Questionnaires were used for collecting data. Descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression analysis with stepwise regression process were used for data analysis. The findings revealed that the spa shops have implemented 7 marketing mix factors of service, price, place, promotion, process, evidence and people with high quality at a good level so far. Whereas the shops have gained the customers' decision at a high level as well. All the 7 marketing mix factors and customers' decision have significant relationship with one another. Nevertheless, only 4 out of the 7 marketing mix factors were selected into the regression equation with 58.80 percent of the variation in the customers' decision was explained. Those 4 factors were people, process, promotion and price ranking in accordance with the significant affect on the customers' decision from the most to the least.

**Keywords:** marketing mix factors; customers' decision on purchasing; spa services

## Introduction

The Global Wellness Institute (GWI) defines spas as establishments that promote wellness through the provision of therapeutic and other professional services aimed at renewing the body, mind and spirit. Most consumers and industry experts would agree that at its core no matter its size, form or business model a spa is an establishment that focuses on wellness. The concepts of wellness, the healing traditions drawn upon, and the therapeutic techniques applied differ dramatically across both nations and types of spas. Spa facilities typically offer a wide variety of services (e.g., massages, facials, body treatments, salon services, water-based treatments, health assessments and more) as well as sales of related products. GWI's estimates include the following spa sub-categories: day/club/salon spas, destination spas and health resorts, hotel/resort spas, thermal/mineral springs spas /medical spas and other spas. The spa industry is a multi-billion dollar business, with customers willing to spend their hard earned money on health spa memberships, treatments, and trips to hotel spas. In fact, the global market size of the spa industry is expected to grow from just under 94 billion U.S. dollars in 2017 to 127.6 billion U.S. dollars by 2022. Moreover, the spa services market, which includes massage services, beauty and grooming, and physical fitness, is expected to grow to over 133 billion U.S. dollars by 2027 (Gough, 2021).

If we want to talk about Spa industry in Thailand, we cannot ignore Thai Massage. The hospitality/ tourism country, Thailand, has a huge spa industry. We will see many “health land”, “Spa” and “Thai massage” shops around shopping malls, hotels and on many street corners. Thailand began its spa history with the Thai massage 2500 years ago. It came to Thailand with Buddhism from India. This type of massage is known as an authentic Thai massage. Thai massages are so popular that many people come to Thailand get spa treatments, specifically, Thai massages. Thus, demand of Thai massage increased. Since its origin, the massage industry in Thailand has expanded its business to not only provide Thai authentic massage, but also to encompass broader spa concepts: rejuvenating, beauty, health, wellness and anti-aging. Consequently, spas not only offer Thai massages, but also sculpture treatments, oil treatments and hot stone massages that are not originally from Thailand. Interestingly, Thai massages have some superficial similarities to Chinese meridian theory. Nowadays, Thai massage is popular among different countries such as Japan, The U.S., New Zealand and Canada (Keiko & Laura, 2012). Thailand's spa industry is growing by 8% annually, faster than the global average. The information provided by GWI also shows that the overall market value of the spa industry in Thailand is growing as high as 8% per annum, from THB 30

billion in 2013 to THB 35 billion in 2015. This figure puts Thailand at 16th place in the world and the 5th in Asia behind China, Japan, South Korea, and India. The main consumer group for Thailand's spa industry are international tourists especially those from East Asia, such as China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Japan, as well as tourists from the western countries. The international consumers also make important contributions to growth in income for Thailand's wellness tourism sector. From the analysis by GWI, the market value of global wellness tourism is projected to grow by 7% per annum between 2015–2020 from THB 19 trillion to THB 27 trillion. It is expected that Thai spa industry will likely benefit from this growing trend of global wellness tourism also (Pitigraisorn, 2018).

Nevertheless, there have been various problems of spa business in Thailand such as, many spas fail within their first few years. Some estimates say that as many as 8 out of 10 don't make it beyond two years; while ISPA estimated, more conservatively, in their 2016 Spa Industry Study that 6.5% of spas go out of business each year (Book4time, 2018). Many past studies have explored customers' e-complaints related to the poor skills of spa therapists, poor services, and non-recommendations for using spa services (Sangpikul, 2021). Since spa business has been very highly competitive (Darakorn Na Ayuthaya et al., 2021), the importance of running a spa business is to make the business survive and grow, customer is one of the most important factors. Therefore, how to make customers choose our spa services, come back again and convince others to use the services are very important issues. To investigate factors affecting customers' decision making on purchasing spa services should indicate why I do this research.

## Objectives

1. To study levels of marketing mix factors and customers' decision making on purchasing spa services in Phranakhon Sri Ayuthaya Province.
2. To study relationship among the marketing mix factors and customers' decision making on purchasing spa services
3. To identify the affect of the related marketing mix factors on the customers' decision making to purchase spa services

## Scope of the study

### Population and Sample

Population and Samples: The target population were 660 customers of the spa shops located in Phranakorn Si Ayutthaya Province during July–October 2022. The sample size needed for this research was approximately 200 which relevant to the acceptable sample size of 10–20 people per variable for multiple regression analysis (Hair et al., 2010). Accidental sampling technique was used to select (20 participants per spa shop) whoever available to answer those questionnaires at the spa shops on the given time as the study samples.

### Content of the study

This research aimed to study the marketing mix factors affecting consumers' decision to purchase spa services in Phranakorn Si Ayutthaya Province. The marketing mix factors consisted of 7 independent variables including services, price, place, promotion, people/personnel, physical evidence and process together with 1 dependent variable of customers'/consumers' decision on purchasing day spa services.

### Duration of study

The researcher spent 4 months for the study. It started from July to October 2022.

## Review of the Related Literature

### Concept of a day spa

International Spa Association (2022) defines a spa as a location where mineral-rich spring water (and sometimes seawater) is used to give medicinal baths. It is a place devoted to overall well-being through a variety of professional services that encourage the renewal of mind, body and spirit. Actually, there are various types of spa such as day spa, club spa, medical spa etc. Day spas are quite popular and offer various personal care treatments. Therefore, the researcher intended to focus on day spas. So, it could be concluded that the target of this study is a day spa which is a business that provides a variety of services for the purpose of improving health, beauty, and relaxation through personal care treatments (Suttikun et al., 2017). Nevertheless, there have been various problems of spa business in Thailand or even in Phranakhon Sri Ayuthaya Province such as, many spas fail within their first few years. Some estimates say that as many as 8 out of 10 don't make it beyond two years; while ISPA estimated, more conservatively, in their 2016 Spa

Industry Study that 6.5% of spas go out of business each year (Book4time, 2018). Many past studies have explored customers' e-complaints related to the poor skills of spa therapists, poor services, and non-recommendations for using spa services (Sangpikul, 2021). Since spa business has been very highly competitive (Darakorn Na Ayuthaya et al., 2021), the importance of running a spa business is to make the business survive and grow, customer is one of the most important factors. Therefore, how to make customers choose our spa services, come back again and convince others to use the services are very important issues. To investigate factors affecting customers' decision making on purchasing spa services should indicate why this research is very important for solving and improving spa business not only in Phranakhon Sri Ayuthaya Province but also in Thailand.

### **Marketing Mix for Services**

The term “marketing mix” is a foundation model for businesses, historically centered around product, price, place, and promotion (also known as the ‘4 Ps’). The marketing mix has been defined as the “set of marketing tools that the firm uses to pursue its marketing objectives in the target market” (Bitner, 1993; Akroush, 2011). Marketing theory emerged in the early twenty-first century. The contemporary marketing mix which has become the dominant framework for marketing management decisions was first published in 1984. In services marketing, an extended marketing mix is used, typically comprising 7 Ps (product, price, promotion, place, packaging, positioning and people), made up of the original 4 Ps extended by process, people and physical evidence (Kotler, 2003).

– **Product/service** refers to what the business offers for sale and may include products or services. This element is an object or service an organization produces on a large scale in a specific volume of units (VanVliet, 2011). The product offer in respect of services can be more usefully analyzed in terms of two components: 1) The core service which represents the core benefit and 2) The secondary services, which represents both the tangible and augmented product levels. The secondary services can be best understood in terms of the manner in which a service is delivered (Chanthanawan, 2020).

– **Price** This is the price the customer pays for a service or product. It may also refer to the sacrifice customers are prepared to make to purchase a product. Sacrifice includes, for example, time and effort. This element of the marketing mix is the only one that has implications for revenue and profit margins. It also includes considerations of customers' perceived value. The perceived value is the benefits customers receive in relation to total costs, which include the price paid plus

other costs associated with the purchase (Bolton & Drew, 1991; Zauner et al., 2015) have shown that future intentions are determined in part by perceived value. In making the decision to return to the service provider, customers are likely to consider whether or not they received value for money. The price is the most important factor for marketing. It is determined by all factors that an organization invests during the preparation of the product. Moreover, it may go up or go down depending on time and the price of a certain product may vary because of market developments.

– **Place** is defined as the “direct or indirect channels to market, geographical distribution, territorial coverage, retail outlet, market location, catalogues, inventory, logistics, and order fulfillment”. Place refers either to the physical location where a business carries out business or the distribution channels used to reach markets. Place may refer to a retail outlet, but increasingly refers to virtual stores such as “a mail order catalogue, a telephone call centre or a website” (Blythe, 2009). This element represents the location where the service is available for the customers. It is possible that the service is not available in all locations but only in a certain selection of locations. Place decisions refer to ease of access which potential customer to a service such as location (distance to services sites) and distribution. Place decisions can involve physical location decisions (as in deciding where to place a hotel), decisions about which intermediaries to use in making a service accessible (Klaysung, 2016).

– **Promotion** refers to “the marketing communication used to make the offer known to potential customers and persuade them to investigate it further” (Blythe, 2009). Promotion elements include “advertising, public relations, direct selling and sales promotions.” This element comprises all the efforts the company or organization makes to stimulate the popularity of their product in the market, for instance by advertising, promotional programmes, etc (Bhasin, 2021). This component plays three important roles: providing necessary information and advice, persuading target customers of the merits of a specific product, and encouraging them to take action at specific times. A number of methods are commonly used to remedy this, including the development of strong brands; encouragement of word-of-mouth recommendation; promotion of trial usage of a service; and the use of credible message sources in promotion. The service marketer should constantly stimulate word-of-mouth communications apart from using regular advertising (Klaysung, 2016). Communication includes informing the customer in a language they can understand (Kotler, 2003).

– **People/personnel** In Booms and Bitner’s service marketing mix, ‘people’ include people who are directly or indirectly involved in the trade of the product or service. These are mainly

customer contact employees, customers, personnel and management. It is mainly the customer contact employees who are the face of the organization and they translate the quality into a service. They are the ‘service’ providers on account of their occupation or entrepreneurship. They include for instance stylists, hair dressers, coaches, trainers, gardeners, lawyers, contact centre employees, etc. They deliver a physical service with a visible result. Service companies are thoroughly aware that they must effectively manage the customer contact employees in order to monitor the quality of the service with respect to attitudes and behavior (Booms & Bitner, 1981; Van Vliet, 2011). People is one of the elements of service marketing mix. People define a service. Thus many companies nowadays are involved into specially getting their staff trained in interpersonal skills and customer service with a focus towards customer satisfaction. In fact many companies have to undergo accreditation to show that their staff is better than the rest. (Bhasin, 2021). The quality of a service between service companies and customers can vary very strongly in addition to other important factors. The lack of homogeneity in services creates difficulties for service companies. Delivery of services often occurs during an interaction between a customer and contact employees. Attitude and behaviour of an employee create a perception of the service as experienced by the customer. It is even more important because it can influence customer satisfaction and in turn the customer’s purchase intentions (Kotler, 2003).

– **Physical** Evidence The physical evidence refers to the surroundings in which the services production is housed (Mittal & Baker, 1998; Lalromawia & Ramana, 2013). Physical evidence also refers to the non-human elements of the service encounter, including equipment, furniture and facilities. It may also refer to the more abstract components of the environment in which the service encounter occurs including interior design, colour schemes and layout. Some aspects of physical evidence provide lasting proof that the service has occurred, such as souvenirs, mementos, invoices and other livery of artifacts (Mclean, 2002). According to Booms and Bitner's framework, the physical evidence is “the service delivered and any tangible goods that facilitate the performance and communication of the service” (Rafiq, 2016). Physical evidence is important to customers because the tangible goods are evidence that the seller has (or has not) provided what the customer was expecting (Booms & Bitner, 1981; Professionalacademy, 2023).

– **Process** The element ‘Process’ of the service marketing mix represents the activities, procedures, protocols and more by which the service in question is eventually delivered to the customer. Process also refers to the flow of activities or mechanism that take place when there is in

an interaction between the customers and the businesses (Bhasin, 2019). As services are results of actions for or with customers, a process involves a sequence of steps and activities to get there. The element ‘process’ of the service marketing mix is an essential element within the entire service marketing mix strategy. This element comprises all activities and services in which the people involved play an important role. As a service is made up of a chain of activities, it is important to take the possible waiting period between the activities into consideration. That is why it is important that marketers take care of the communication about possible delivery times and by doing so the management of customer expectations. Creating and managing effective service processes are for the existence of service companies (Booms & Bitner, 1981; Vishakha, 2023).

**Customers’/consumers’ Decision-Making** Customer/Consumer Decision Making refers to the process under which *Customer/Consumer* go through in deciding what to purchase, including problem recognition, information searching, evaluation of alternatives, making the decision and post-purchase evaluation (Lucid Content Team, 2022). For each purchase, regardless of customer age, a purchase decision made and a variety of associated behaviors can occur. These certain types of behaviors evidence varying degrees of dependency on outside sources of influence, and the customer decisions can be categorized by the level of this dependency. They demonstrated that customers may make decisions autonomously, while hybrid and subcontracted decisions are, respectively, decision styles (or types) in which customers partially or totally give up control over the decision by soliciting help (e.g., from a salesperson, friend, relative, or the published report of a product testing agency). A subcontracted decision, for example, might be one in which the customer allows a salesperson to make his/her purchase choice. In hybrid decision making, a consumer might confine his or her information search and purchase choice to only those brands recommended by one or more referrers (Klaysung, 2016).

### **Conclusion of the Related Literature**

Concept of day spas: A day spa is a business that provides a variety of services for the purpose of improving health, beauty, and relaxation through personal care treatments. Since spa business has been very highly competitive, the importance of running a spa business is to make the business survive and grow. Customer is one of the most important factors. Therefore, how to make customers choose our spa services, come back again and convince others to use the services are very important issues.

Marketing mix factors and customers' decision Marketing mix is a foundation model for businesses, historically centered around product, price, place, and promotion (also known as the '4Ps'). Marketing theory emerged in the early twenty-first century. In services marketing, an extended marketing mix is used, typically comprising 7Ps: Product/service refers to what the business offers for sale and may include products or services. Price is what the customer pays for a service or product. Place represents the location where the service is available for the customers. Promotion comprises all the efforts the company or organization makes to stimulate the popularity of their product/service in the market. People are personnel directly or indirectly involved in the trade of the product or service. Physical evidence refers to the surroundings in which the services production is housed. Process comprises all activities and services in which the people involved play an important role. The marketing mix elements mentioned are theoretically hypothesized as factors/independent variables affecting customers'/consumers' decision making which refers to the dependent variable or process under which consumers go through in deciding what to purchase.

## Methodology

This study is a causal-comparative research with customers'/consumers' decision on purchasing spa service was the dependent variable and marketing mix factors consisted of service, price, place, promotion, people(personnel/staff), physical evidence and process were the independent variables.

**Population and samples:** The target population were 660 customers of the spa shops located in Phranakorn Sri Ayutthaya Province during July–October 2022. The sample size needed for this research was approximately 200 participants which relevant to the acceptable sample size of 10–20 people per variable for multiple regression analysis (Hair et al., 2010). Accidental sampling technique was used to select (20 participants per spa shop) whoever available to answer those questionnaires at the spa shops on the given time.

**Research Instrument:** Questionnaires were used to collect data for the study. Each questionnaire consists of three sections, which are customer personal data, marketing mix for day spa services typically comprising 7Ps (product/service, price, place, promotion, personnel, physical evidence and process) and customer/consumer decision making process under which customer/consumers go through in deciding what to purchase according to information of the spa

service, including problem recognition, information searching, evaluation of alternatives, making the decision and post-purchase evaluation. Section 1 is a checklist and fill-in the blank form. Section 2 consists of Likert 5-level scale of marketing mix on 7 elements: product/services, prices, places, promotion, personnel, physical evidence and processes. Section 3 consists of Likert 5-level scale of overall customer consumer decision making process on the information of 7 elements: services, prices, places, promotion, personnel, physical evidence and processes. The questionnaire was assessed by 3 experts for content validity with the coefficients of .67–1.00 and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for overall reliability and each element of .82–.95

**Procedure of collecting data:** There are approximately 10 day spa shops locate in Phranakorn Si Ayutthaya Province participated in the research project. The researcher went to contact the target spa shops managers in person for permission to conduct the collecting data and also to distribute the questionnaires. The research team set up a plan and schedule to visit customers at day spa shop daily throughout the month. During the period for collecting data each day, the spa shop managers were met, along with the participants at each spa shop at a break or an appropriate time and they were asked for permission to distribute the questionnaires. Furthermore, the research team had to keep in mind trying to avoid repeating the collection of data from the same participants. Approximately 200 questionnaires were distributed and the researcher had collected about 200 perfect questionnaires or 100 percent of all respondents.

**Data Analysis:** The Statistical Package for The Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse the data. The data analyses for this research were conducted in accordance with the research objectives; descriptive statistics were applied for sections 1, 2 and 3 of the questionnaires. Multiple linear regression analysis with stepwise regression process were used to find out the relationship among all variables (The marketing mix factors consisted of 7 independent variables including services, prices, places, promotion, personnel, physical evidence and processes together with 1 dependent variable of customers' /consumers' decision on purchasing spa service.) and the influence of overall and each independent variable of marketing mix factors on the dependent variable of customers'/consumers' decision on purchasing spa service.

## Results of Analysis

There are 8 variables selected for the study. They are 7 marketing mix factors namely service, price, place, promotion, process, evidence and people as independent variables. Furthermore, there is only customers' decision as dependent variable.

**Part 1** Levels of 7 market mix factors (service, price, place, promotion, process, evidence and people) and customers' decision.

**Table 1** Mean, Standard deviation, Quality/Quantity of 7 marketing mix factors and customers' decision.

Variables	$\bar{x}$	SD	Quality/Quantity
X <sub>1</sub> service	3.67	.74	good
X <sub>2</sub> price	3.85	.81	good
X <sub>3</sub> place	3.73	.81	good
X <sub>4</sub> promotion	3.65	.79	good
X <sub>5</sub> process	3.77	.76	good
X <sub>6</sub> evidence	3.81	.74	good
X <sub>7</sub> people	3.79	.83	good
X <sub>8</sub> customers' decision	3.76	.75	high

According to Table 1, the quality of all the market mix factors: service ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.67), price ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.85), place ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.73), promotion ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.65), process ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.77), evidence ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.81) and people ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.79) were at a vb good level whereas the quantity of customers' decision ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.76) was at a high level.

**Part 2** Relationship among 7 marketing mix factors (service, price, place, promotion, process, evidence and people) and customers' decision.

**Table 2** Correlation coefficients of Relationship among 7 market mix factors and customers' decision

variables	X <sub>1</sub>	X <sub>2</sub>	X <sub>3</sub>	X <sub>4</sub>	X <sub>5</sub>	X <sub>6</sub>	X <sub>7</sub>	y
X <sub>1</sub> service	1	.367**	.572**	.870**	.643**	.528**	.604**	.538**
X <sub>2</sub> price		1	.441**	.432**	.601**	.558**	.523**	.542**
X <sub>3</sub> place			1	.641**	.658**	.600**	.566**	.544**
X <sub>4</sub> promotion				1	.728**	.685**	.606**	.622**
X <sub>5</sub> process					1	.769**	.704**	.706**
X <sub>6</sub> evidence						1	.767**	.691**
X <sub>7</sub> people							1	.700**
y customers' decision								1

\*\* p < .01

The data analysis results in Table2 show that each variable of the 7 market mix factors (service, price, place, promotion, process, evidence) and customers' decision had statistically significant positive correlation at .01. ( $r = .367 - .870$ )

**Part 3** The Influence of the Market Mix Factors Significantly Included in the Final Model on Customers' Decision

### 3.1 Relationship of the Independent Variables and Dependent variable in the Final Model

**Table 3** Values used to determine the relationship of the independent variables and dependent variable in the final model

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Standard Error of the Estimate
4	.774	.599	.588	3.348

The data analysis results in Table3 show that 4 market mix variables (people, process, promotion and price) included in the model altogether were significantly related ( $R = .774$ ) to the dependent variable (customers' decision). In addition, the dependent variable (customers' decision) was 58.80 percent ( $\text{Adjusted } R^2 = .588$ ) explained by the 4 marketing mix variables mentioned above.

### 3.2 The Influence of the Selected Market Mix Factors on Customers' Decision

**Table 4** Statistics used to test the influence of the Selected Market Mix Factors on Customers' Decision

Model 4	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	2640.214	4	660.054	58.902**	.000
Residual	1770.547	158	11.206		
Total	1.836	162			

\*\*  $p < .01$

The data analysis results in Table 4 show that there are at least 1 variable of marketing mix factors influencing customers' decision. ( $F = 58.902$ )

### 3.3 Investigation of Regression Coefficient of each Market Mix Variable Influencing Customers' s Decision Variable

**Table 5** Regression coefficients of each market mix variable influencing customers' decision variable

Variables Model 4	Unstandardized		Standardized	t	Sig
	coefficients		coefficients		
	B	std error	$\beta$		
constant	3.980	1.525		2.609**	0.000
X <sub>7</sub> people	0.447	0.094	0.351	4.772**	0.000
X <sub>5</sub> process	0.242	0.088	0.247	2.752**	0.007
X <sub>4</sub> promotion	0.280	0.123	0.170	2.272*	0.024
X <sub>2</sub> price	0.441	0.206	0.137	2.136*	0.034

\*\*p< .01, \*p< .05

The data analysis results in Table 5 show that there are 4 variables out of 7 the market mix factors significantly influencing customers' decision variable: X<sub>7</sub> people ( $\beta = 0.351$ ), X<sub>5</sub> process ( $\beta = 0.247$ ), X<sub>4</sub> promotion ( $\beta = 0.170$ ), X<sub>2</sub> price ( $\beta = 0.137$ ) ranking from the most to the least.

## Discussion

According to the objectives of this research, the discussion of the findings were classified into 1. levels of each marketing mix factor and customers' decision making on purchasing spa services in Phranakhon Sri Ayuthaya Province. 2. the relationship among the marketing mix factors and customers' decision making on purchasing spa services and 3. the influence of the related marketing mix factors on customers' decision making on purchasing spa services.

1. It was found that the spa shops in Phranakorn Si Ayutthaya Province have generally provided service, price, place, promotion, process, evidence and people with high quality at a good level for their customers so far. Moreover, they have gained acceptable customers' decision at a high level as well. Nevertheless, It has never been satisfied because spa business is very highly competitive. Not surprisingly, due to increase in a number of competitions within the business, they have to raise up the quality of service, price, place, promotion, process, evidence and people so that they would be able to encourage customers' higher decision of buying spa services. To survive this business, especially remaining profitability, it is vital to highlight on service, price, place, promotion, process, evidence and people (Papadimitriou & Karteliotis, 2000) as well as customers' decision (Durongdumrongchai et al., 2019).

2. The analysis results of simple linear correlation indicated that all 8 variables analysed in this study (service, price, place, promotion, process, evidence and people and customers' decision) had statistically significant positive correlation at 0.01 ( $r = .367 - .870$ ). It showed that those variables have strong relationship with one another (Heckman, 2016). Furthermore, Multiple linear regression (MLR) was used to examine how marketing mix variables (service, price, place, promotion, process, evidence and people) were related to customers' decision variable. According to the results of the analysis, it indicated that the adjusted  $R^2$  is .588. It means 58.80 percent of the variation in the customers' decision variable is explained by the marketing mix variables. So, in simple terms, higher the adjusted  $R^2$ , the more variation of customers' decision is explained by marketing mix variables and hence better is the model (Kenton, 2020).

3. Multiple linear regression was used to identify the strength of the influence that the marketing mix variables have on customers' decision variable. According to the results of the analysis, it indicated that 4 variables out of 7 variables namely;  $X_7$  people ( $\beta = 0.351$ ),  $X_5$  process ( $\beta = 0.247$ ),  $X_4$  promotion ( $\beta = 0.170$ ),  $X_2$  price ( $\beta = 0.137$ ) ranking from the most to the least significantly influencing customers' decision variable. In other words, they capture customers' attention to be satisfied with the spa shop and they possibly contributed favorable customers' decision to buy the services of the shops. Since people or staff are the service providers. They are directly involved in the trade products or services (Bhasin, 2021). Process represents the activities, procedures, protocols and more by which the service is eventually delivered to the customer (Boom & Bitner, 1981; Kotler, 2003; Bhasin, 2021). Promotion elements include all the efforts the spa shops make to stimulate the popularity of their product or services (Kotler, 2003; Klaysung, 2016; Bhasin, 2021). In addition, the price is what the customer pays for a service or product. In making the decision to return to the service provider, customers are likely to consider whether or not they received value for money (Bolton & Drew, 1991). Therefore, according to the findings it could be confirmed that people, process, promotion and price are marketing mix factors or variables having the strongest influence on customers' decision of purchasing spa services respectively.

The objectives of this study were to 1) study levels of marketing mix factors and customers' decision making on purchasing spa services, 2) study the relationship among the marketing mix factors and customers' decision making on purchasing spa services and 3) identify the affect of the related marketing mix factors on customers' decision making on purchasing spa services. The target population were 660 customers of the spa shops located in Phranakorn Si Ayutthaya Province during

July–October 2022. 200 samples needed for the research were selected by means of accidental sampling technique. Questionnaires were used for collecting data. Descriptive statistics, multiple linear regression analysis with stepwise regression process were used for data analysis.

The findings revealed that the spa shops have generally implemented service, price, place, promotion, process, evidence and people with high quality at a good level for their customers so far. Moreover, it was found that they have gained acceptable customers' decision at a high level as well. Moreover, all service, price, place, promotion, process, evidence people and customers' decision have strong relationship with one another. The findings also indicated that 58.80 percent of the variation in the customers' decision was explained by the 4 out of 7 marketing mix factors included in the regression model. In addition, it revealed that the 4 marketing mix factors of people, process, promotion and price had significant influence on customers' decision ranking from the most to the least.

## Recommendation

### Implication

The following suggestions needed to be maintained/improved in the interest of managements to enhance quality of marketing mix factors as well as stimulating customers' decision to purchase spa services

1. Related organizations should consider integrating all 7 marketing mix factors but focus on especially people, process, promotion and price into the policy to upgrade spa business for both local and foreign tourists.

2. Spa shop managers should strongly focus on the high quality of marketing mix factors especially 4 marketing mix factors of people, process, promotion and price because of their strong influence on customers' decision of their purchasing spa service.

3. Spa shop managers have to pay attention to all the details and keep trying to improve people/staff's qualifications, all the efforts the spa shops make to stimulate the popularity of their product or services including appropriate price for spa services so that the shops can encourage customers' decision on purchasing better.

### Future research

1. This research focuses on the spa shops in Phranakorn Si Ayutthaya Province excluding those in others. So, the next research should focus more in the other places.

2. There might be other variables influencing customer loyalty. Therefore, future researchers may investigate more on variables relating to customers' decision on purchasing spa services

3. Since marketing mix factors and customers' decision seem to be abstract and complicated are variables, for more accuracy and deeply understanding the research problem, it requires a higher level of statistical sophistication. So, Structure Equation Model (SEM) should be recommended for the research analysis.

### New Knowledge

The new research findings revealed that the spa shops in Phranakorn Si Ayutthaya Province have generally implemented 7 marketing mix factors of service, price, place, promotion, process, evidence and people/personnel at a good level whereas they gained acceptable customers' decision on purchasing spa services at a high level as their feedback. In terms of the connection among the 7 marketing mix factors together with customers' decision, there was significant relationship among them. Nevertheless, there were only 4 out of 7 factors of people, process, promotion and price influencing customer' decision. According to beta value from the research findings, the predicting equation could be formed as the following.

$$y = \beta_7 x_7 + \beta_5 x_5 + \beta_4 x_4 + \beta_2 x_2 + c \quad (y = .351x_7 + .247 x_5 + .170 x_4 + .137 + c)$$

when  $y$  = dependent variable (customer' decision on purchasing spa services)

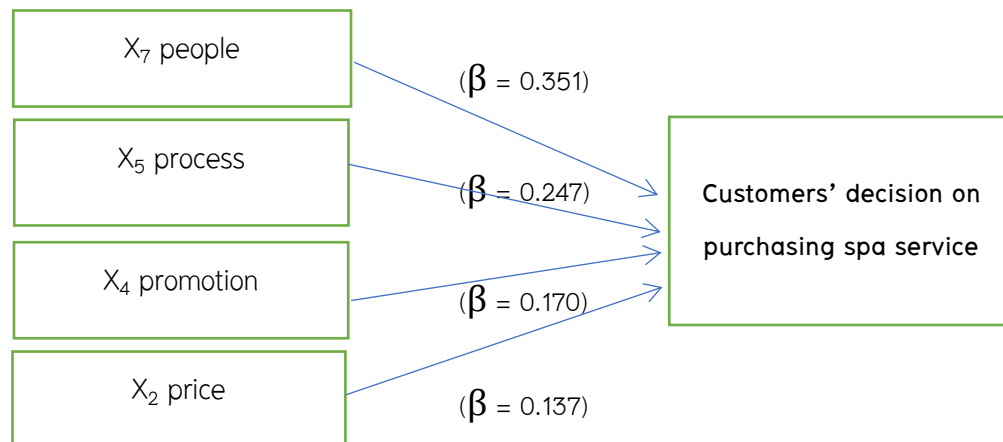
$\beta$  = Standardized coefficients

$X$  = independent variables ( $x_7$  people,  $x_5$  process,  $x_4$  promotion,  $x_2$  price)

$c$  = the error in predicting the value of  $y$

The research findings mentioned above can be used to create not only a new regression equation but also conceptual model indicating causal relationship that can explain how the marketing mix factors selected into the regression equation affect customer purchasing decision variance as follows.

*Conceptual Model*



The beta value  $\beta$  shown in the equation were used in measuring how effectively the marketing mix factors significantly influence customer's decision by which  $x_7$  people/personnel having the greatest influence followed by  $x_5$  process,  $x_4$  promotion and  $x_2$  price respectively. Therefore, the 4 factors with significant influence on the customers' decision should be more focused on so that the spa service quality can be raised up more effectively.

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