



THE INFLUENCE OF MARKETING MIX AND SERVICE QUALITY ON FOREIGN TOURISTS' INTENTION TO STAY IN MEDIUM-SIZED HOTELS IN PHUKET

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Received November, 30, 2025; Revised March, 23, 2026; Accepted March, 26, 2026

Abstract

This study aims to: (1) examine opinions on the marketing mix and service quality influencing foreign tourists' intention to stay in medium-sized hotels in Phuket, (2) identify marketing mix components affecting this intention, and (3) explore service quality aspects with similar effects. A mixed-methods design was employed using questionnaires and interviews. Quantitative data were collected from 400 foreign tourists ($n = 400$) who had stayed in medium-sized hotels in Phuket, while qualitative insights were obtained through in-depth interviews with seven informants ($n = 7$) from the hotel sector. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) and multiple regression analysis, whereas qualitative data were examined through content analysis and presented narratively. The findings revealed high levels of agreement across all dimensions. Both the marketing mix and service quality significantly influenced tourists' behavioral intention to stay. The regression results indicated that marketing mix variables explained 34.6% of the variance ($R^2 = .346$) in tourists' intention to stay, while service quality demonstrated stronger explanatory power, accounting for 71.2% of the variance ($R^2 = .712$). Among the marketing mix factors, place, price, and product showed the strongest influence on tourists' behavioral intention, highlighting the importance of accessibility, perceived value, and room quality. In terms of service quality, empathy, reliability, and responsiveness have been identified the most influential dimensions affecting tourists' accommodation decisions. Overall, the findings suggest that medium-sized hotels should strengthen both marketing strategies and service quality practices, particularly by enhancing service responsiveness, maintaining competitive pricing, and improving accessibility through digital platforms and online travel agencies. These strategies may help medium-sized hotels increase competitiveness and attract international tourists in Phuket's tourism market.

Keywords: Marketing Mix, Service Quality, Behavioral Intention to Use, Medium-sized Hotel, Phuket Province



Introduction

The tourism industry plays a critical role in driving economic growth at both global and national levels, contributing substantially to income generation, employment, and sustainable development (UNWTO, 2023). In Thailand, tourism is not only a key economic pillar but also an essential mechanism for promoting cultural heritage, environmental conservation, and international engagement (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2021). Among Thailand's major tourist destinations, Phuket stands out due to its abundant natural resources, strong international connectivity, and well-established global reputation. In 2023, Phuket welcomed more than 10 million visitors and generated approximately 330 billion baht in tourism revenue, reflecting the province's central role in Thailand's tourism economy.

Phuket currently has approximately 1,786 accommodation establishments providing more than 92,600 rooms, reflecting the large scale of the hospitality sector supporting international tourism (The Nation Thailand, 2023). Furthermore, industry reports estimate that around 1,000 licensed hotels operate in Phuket with nearly 100,000 available rooms, highlighting the island's substantial accommodation capacity (Bangkok Post, 2024). However, despite their importance within the tourism economy, medium-sized hotels often face significant structural challenges, including intensifying competition, market saturation, rising operational costs, labor shortages, and increasing service expectations from international tourists in the post-pandemic tourism landscape (Bank of Thailand, 2023; World Bank, 2023). Compared with large hotel chains that possess strong financial resources and established brand recognition, medium-sized hotels frequently operate with limited marketing budgets, human resources, and technological capabilities, which may constrain their ability to maintain consistent service quality and compete effectively in the global tourism market. At the same time, tourist behavior has become increasingly complex and experience-oriented. Contemporary travelers place greater emphasis on personalized experiences, convenience, responsiveness, and overall well-being, rather than merely functional accommodation services (Huddin et al., 2024; Tarnanidis et al., 2026). Moreover, the rapid expansion of digital platforms, online booking systems, and social media has significantly transformed tourist decision-making processes, as travelers increasingly rely on online information, user reviews, and digital booking channels when selecting accommodation (Euromonitor International, 2022). These evolving expectations place additional pressure on medium-sized hotels to adapt their marketing strategies and service delivery in order to remain competitive in Phuket's dynamic tourism environment.

Despite the extensive application of the 7Ps marketing mix and SERVQUAL frameworks in hospitality research, several limitations remain when applying these models



to the contemporary tourism environment. Most previous studies have examined these frameworks primarily within the context of large-scale or chain hotels, where standardized service systems, strong brand recognition, and substantial marketing resources shape tourists' expectations and experiences. In contrast, medium-sized hotels often operate with greater managerial flexibility, closer guest interaction, and more personalized service delivery, which may influence tourists' perceptions and behavioral intentions in ways that differ from those observed in large hotel chains. These characteristics suggest that traditional service marketing models may not fully capture the unique competitive dynamics of medium-sized hotels. Furthermore, the rapid growth of digital consumer behavior has fundamentally transformed the decision-making process of tourists. Online travel agencies, social media platforms, user-generated reviews, and digital booking systems have become central sources of information that shape tourists' accommodation choices. In such a digital environment, factors such as online reputation, accessibility of information, responsiveness to digital communication, and perceived authenticity of service experiences may interact with traditional marketing mix and service quality dimensions in complex ways. However, existing empirical studies have rarely examined how these factors influence tourists' behavioral intentions specifically within the context of medium-sized hotels. Therefore, there remains a need for an investigation in a specific context that re-examines the relevance of marketing mix elements and service quality dimensions under conditions of intensified competition, evolving tourist expectations, and increasing digital influence. Understanding how these factors shape foreign tourists' intention to stay in medium-sized hotels is essential for developing strategies that enable this important accommodation segment to remain competitive in Phuket's rapidly evolving tourism market.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the level of opinions regarding the marketing mix and service quality that influence foreign tourists' intention to stay in medium-sized hotels in Phuket.
2. To investigate the specific components of the marketing mix that influence foreign tourists' intention to stay in medium-sized hotels in Phuket.
3. To explore the aspects of service quality that influence foreign tourists' intention to stay in medium-sized hotels in Phuket.

Literature Review

Concept of Medium-Sized Hotel Businesses

Medium-sized hotels are important in the tourism economy as they serve market segments seeking quality services at reasonable prices. Compared with large-scale hotel



chains, medium-sized hotels often demonstrate advantages in terms of operational flexibility, cost efficiency, and faster managerial decision-making. These characteristics allow them to respond more effectively to dynamic market conditions and external shocks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, during which many hotels adopted enhanced hygiene protocols and contactless service technologies to maintain customer confidence. In addition to their economic contributions, medium-sized hotels also support local development by generating employment opportunities and utilizing community resources (UNWTO, 2020). Their relatively smaller organizational structures often enable closer interaction with guests and more personalized service experiences, which may positively influence customer perceptions and behavioral intentions. Consequently, medium-sized hotels represent an important segment within the tourism ecosystem, contributing not only to economic growth but also to the social and sustainable development of tourism destinations.

Marketing Mix (7Ps) in Hospitality Services

The marketing mix framework has been recognized as a fundamental strategy for responding to consumer needs in service industries. The extended 7Ps marketing mix, consisting of product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process, is widely applied in hospitality and tourism research to explain how service providers deliver value and create competitive advantages (Kotler et al., 2021; Ofosu-Boateng & Acquaye, 2020; Manirochana et al., 2021). Recent studies suggest that the effective implementation of the 7Ps framework plays a crucial role in shaping tourists' perceptions, satisfaction, and behavioral responses. For instance, product attributes, pricing strategies, and service delivery processes can influence perceived value and trust in hospitality services. In Phuket and other tourism destinations, digital communication channels including social media marketing and electronic word-of-mouth have further strengthened the promotion and information accessibility in influencing tourists' accommodation choices (Rimadias et al., 2021). These developments indicate that the marketing mix remains a relevant framework for understanding how hotel businesses attract and retain customers in an increasingly competitive tourism environment.

Concept of Hotel Selection Decision-Making

Hotel selection decision-making refers to the process through which tourists evaluate and choose accommodation that best satisfies their needs and preferences. According to consumer behavior theory, the decision-making process typically involves several sequential stages, including problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, and the final purchase decision (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2021). In the tourism and hospitality context, travelers rely on multiple sources of information such as online reviews, travel platforms, and personal recommendations to compare accommodation options before making a final selection. Previous studies suggest that various factors influence hotel



selection decisions, including price competitiveness, service quality, location convenience, and perceived value (ampaio & Régio, 2024; Jesu Frederick & IS, 2024). In recent years, digital platforms and electronic word-of-mouth have further intensified competition among accommodation providers, making the decision-making process more complex for tourists. As a result, hotel businesses must carefully design their marketing strategies and service delivery to positively influence tourists' evaluation and choice of accommodation. Therefore, understanding the factors that affect hotel selection decision-making is essential for improving hotel competitiveness and attracting international tourists.

Service Quality in the Hospitality Industry

Service quality is widely recognized as a critical determinant of customer satisfaction, loyalty, and long-term business performance in the hospitality sector. The SERVQUAL model, developed by Parasuraman et al. (1990), is one of the most widely adopted frameworks for measuring service quality across five dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. These dimensions collectively capture both the tangible and intangible aspects of service delivery that shape customers' perceptions of quality. In the context of hotel services, maintaining high service quality is particularly important because hospitality products are largely intangible, perishable, and simultaneously produced and consumed. As a result, consistent service delivery and the ability to build trust with customers are essential for sustaining competitiveness. Previous studies have demonstrated that improvements in service quality can positively influence customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions, especially in tourism destinations characterized by intense competition among accommodation providers (Nguyen, 2021).

Behavioral Intention in Tourism and Hospitality

Behavioral intention refers to a consumer's psychological readiness to perform a specific behavior in the future, such as choosing or revisiting a particular service provider. According to the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), behavioral intention is shaped by an individual's attitudes toward a behavior and perceived social norms (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010, as cited in Fakfare et al., 2025). In tourism and hospitality research, behavioral intention is widely used as a predictor of future customer behavior, including hotel selection, revisit intention, and recommendation to others. Consumer intentions are influenced by multiple factors, including prior experiences, perceptions of service quality, and marketing-related stimuli such as branding and promotional communication (Engel et al., 1995; Fitzsimons & Morwitz, 1996). In the hotel industry, understanding tourists' behavioral intentions is primarily important because it helps explain how marketing strategies and service experiences translate into actual accommodation choices. Consequently, examining the relationship between marketing mix elements, service quality, and behavioral intention to

stay provides valuable insights into tourists' decision-making processes when selecting hotel services.

Conceptual Framework

This study employed mixed-methods research design. The research framework was developed based on the concepts and theories of the marketing mix, service quality, and hotel selection decision-making. Based on the marketing mix framework (Kotler et al., 2021), the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1990), and the theory of behavioral intention (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010), the conceptual framework of this study was developed as illustrated in Figure 1.

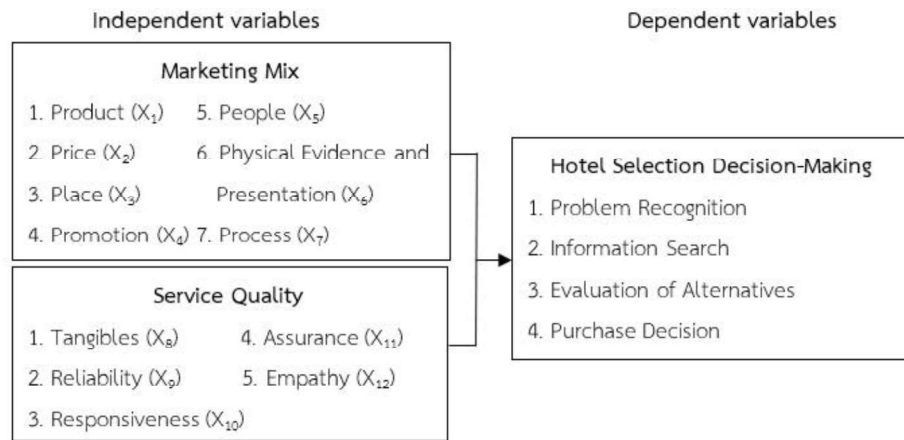


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

This study employed a mixed-method research design to examine the influence of marketing mix elements and service quality on foreign tourists' intention to stay in medium-sized hotels in Phuket, Thailand. Phuket was selected as the study area due to its role as a major international tourism destination with a high volume of international visitors.

Quantitative data were collected from 400 international tourists aged 18 years and above who had stayed at least one night in a hotel in Phuket (n = 400). The sample size was determined using Yamane's formula (1973). The study employed convenience sampling, and questionnaires were distributed to international tourists in major tourist areas of Phuket, including Patong Beach, Bang Tao Beach, Kata Beach, and Phuket Town, where international visitors commonly stay and travel. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire measured on a 5-point Likert scale, covering marketing mix factors, service quality dimensions, and hotel selection decision-making. The questionnaire was reviewed by three experts in tourism and hospitality management to assess content validity, and the



Index of Item–Objective Congruence (IOC) values ranged from 0.67 to 1.00, indicating acceptable content validity. The reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed with a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.96 (Cronbach, 1980), indicating high internal consistency. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used for preliminary analysis, while multiple regression analysis was applied to identify factors significantly influencing tourists’ hotel selection decision-making.

Qualitative data were obtained through in-depth interviews with seven informants ($n = 7$) who were hotel entrepreneurs or managers of medium-sized hotels in Phuket that had been operating for one to three years. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that the informants possessed relevant experience in hotel management and marketing practices. A structured interview guide focusing on consumer behavior, marketing mix strategies, and service quality management was employed during the interviews. The qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis, and the findings were presented in a descriptive narrative to support and enrich the quantitative results. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings enhanced the validity of the study through methodological triangulation and provided comprehensive insights for developing effective marketing and service quality strategies for medium-sized hotels in Phuket.

Research Findings

The analysis of data from 400 respondents revealed that most were female (56.25%), aged 20–30 years (38%), single (58.75%), and held a bachelor’s degree (46.25%), with 45.50% being employed and reporting an average monthly income of over USD 2,500. The largest proportion of respondents were residents of Europe (25.50%). Regarding service usage behavior, the majority (61.00%) had stayed in medium-sized hotels in Phuket between one and ten times or more, with 60.91% booking their accommodations one to three weeks in advance. Most respondents stayed for four to seven days (63.50%), selected medium-sized hotels primarily due to affordable pricing (42.50%), arranged their travel and hotel reservations independently (54.00%), and traveled mainly for tourism or leisure purposes (79.75%).

Table 1 Presents the mean, standard deviation, and levels of opinion regarding the marketing mix.

Marketing Mix (7Ps)	\bar{x}	S.D.	Level of Opinion
1. Product	3.99	0.701	High
2. Price	3.81	0.719	High
3. Place	3.93	0.748	High
4. Promotion	3.99	0.712	High



Marketing Mix (7Ps)	\bar{x}	S.D.	Level of Opinion
5. People	4.08	0.765	High
6. Physical evidence	3.99	0.717	High
7. Process	3.88	0.710	High
Overall Average	3.95	0.724	High

According to Table 1, among the marketing mix dimensions, people received the highest evaluation, indicating that tourists place strong importance on staff behavior and service interaction.

Interviews with medium-sized hotel managers in Phuket showed that foreign tourists value all 7Ps of the marketing mix. Key factors include product quality, fair pricing, modern distribution, strong promotions, attentive staff, clean environments, and efficient service processes. Integrating these elements boosts customer satisfaction, encourages repeat visits, and fosters long-term loyalty.

Table 2 Presents the mean, standard deviation, and levels of opinion regarding service quality.

Service Quality	\bar{x}	S.D.	Level of Opinion
1. Tangibles	3.94	0.708	High
2. Reliability	3.96	0.708	High
3. Responsiveness	3.91	0.715	High
4. Assurance	4.06	0.730	High
5. Empathy	4.07	0.719	High
Overall Average	3.98	0.716	High

According to Table 2, respondents perceived the service quality of medium-sized hotels in Phuket at a high level (mean = 3.98). Among the service quality dimensions, interpersonal aspects—specifically empathy and assurance—received the strongest evaluations, indicating that tourists value attentive service, trust, and staff professionalism. Reliability, tangibles, and responsiveness were also rated highly, suggesting that both service performance and physical facilities contribute positively to tourists' perceptions of hotel quality.

Interviews with medium-sized hotel managers in Phuket revealed that all 5 dimensions of service quality—tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—are essential. Tangibles like clean, well-designed facilities create strong first impressions, while reliable and prompt service builds trust and satisfaction. Assurance through professional communication fosters a sense of security, and genuine empathy from



staff helps strengthen guest relationships. Together, these elements enhance service quality and encourage long-term loyalty among international tourists.

Table 3 Presents the mean, standard deviation, and levels of opinion regarding purchase decision.

Purchase Decision	\bar{x}	S.D.	Level of Opinion
1) Customers decide to purchase services based on hotel promotions.	3.99	0.689	High
2) Customers choose to purchase services from the hotel due to the discounts offered.	4.12	0.712	High
3) Customers purchase services from the hotel based on reviews they have read.	4.01	0.763	High
4) Customers have made purchase decisions through social media platforms on more than one occasion.	4.23	0.687	Very High
5) Customers decide to purchase services based on recommendations from friends or acquaintances.	4.32	0.712	Very High
Overall Average	4.13	0.713	High

According to Table 3, respondents demonstrated a high level of agreement regarding the factors influencing their hotel purchase decisions. Interpersonal recommendations and social influence emerged as the most important drivers, indicating that tourists strongly rely on word-of-mouth communication when selecting accommodation. Digital channels, particularly social media platforms and online reviews, significantly contributed to shaping consumers' purchase decisions. In addition, price incentives such as discounts contributed to tourists' decisions, while traditional hotel promotions were relatively less influential compared with peer recommendations and online information.

Interviews with hotel managers in Phuket revealed that international tourists follow a typical decision-making process—starting with travel motivation, then seeking clear online information, comparing options based on quality, price, and features, and finally making decisions influenced by convenient booking, transparent pricing, and added services like transfers or flexible check-in, all of which significantly affect their choice of medium-sized hotels in Phuket.

Prior to conducting the regression analysis, multicollinearity diagnostics were performed. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values ranged between 1.32 and 2.48, which



are below the recommended threshold of 10, indicating that multicollinearity was not a concern in this study.

Table 4 Results of multiple regression analysis of the marketing mix factors influencing the behavioral intention to use medium-sized hotels among international tourists in Phuket province.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std.Error	Beta (β)		
(Constant)	1.542	0.346		4.433	0.000*
1. Product (X_1)	0.102	0.036	0.123	2.362	0.000*
2. Price (X_2)	0.129	0.041	0.141	3.125	0.002*
3. Place (X_3)	0.271	0.032	0.326	6.025	0.000*
4. Promotion (X_4)	0.125	0.036	0.052	1.156	0.003*
5. People (X_5)	0.023	0.031	0.042	1.123	0.279
6. Physical evidence (X_6)	0.145	0.041	0.164	3.763	0.000*
7. Process (X_7)	0.014	0.041	0.003	0.136	0.636
R = 0.426		Adjusted R ² = 0.321			
R ² = 0.346		SE = 1.854			

The regression analysis indicates that several marketing mix components significantly influence international tourists' behavioral intention to use medium-sized hotels in Phuket. In particular, attributes related to product quality, pricing, location accessibility, promotional communication, and physical evidence were significantly influencing tourists' decisions. Among these factors, location-related aspects showed the strongest influence, highlighting the importance of accessibility and proximity to key tourist attractions. The model explains 34.6% of the variance in tourists' behavioral intention ($R^2 = .346$), suggesting that marketing mix factors moderately contribute to explaining tourists' accommodation choices in the context of medium-sized hotels in Phuket.



Table 5 Results of the multiple regression analysis of service quality influencing international tourists' behavioral intention to use medium-sized hotels in Phuket province.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std.Error	Beta (β)		
(Constant)	0.412	0.123		4.326	0.000*
1. Tangibles (X_8)	0.156	0.039	0.185	5.123	0.000*
2. Reliability (X_9)	0.174	0.045	0.179	4.432	0.000*
3. Responsiveness (X_{10})	0.178	0.049	0.196	4.231	0.001*
4. Assurance (X_{11})	0.039	0.041	0.052	1.198	0.329
5. Empathy (X_{12})	0.412	0.037	0.351	7.126	0.000*
R	= 0.785	Adjusted R ²	0.796		
R ²	= 0.712	SE	1.756		

The regression results indicate that several service quality dimensions significantly influence international tourists' behavioral intention to use medium-sized hotels in Phuket, including tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, and empathy. Among these factors, empathy showed the strongest standardized effect. The model demonstrated strong explanatory power, with $R^2 = .712$, indicating that service quality variables account for 71.2% of the variance in tourists' behavioral intention to use medium-sized hotels in Phuket.

Discussion of Findings

The findings for Research Objective 1 demonstrate that marketing mix elements and service quality jointly influence tourists' intention to stay. Core attributes such as room quality, fair pricing, accessibility, and credible promotional communication emerged as key determinants, underscoring the importance of coherent service delivery and trustworthy information. These results are consistent with prior studies emphasizing the role of the 7Ps, particularly product quality, personnel, and value for money in building trust and satisfaction. Additionally, service quality dimensions including comfort, safety, responsiveness, and staff competence significantly impacted tourists' intentions, reinforcing the importance of tangible service cues and empathetic interactions. The strong influence of credible online information further reflects contemporary tourist behavior, as digital platforms and reviews increasingly shape accommodation decisions.

The qualitative findings also highlight the growing influence of digital platforms on tourists' accommodation decisions. Online travel agencies, social media platforms, and user-



generated reviews increasingly function as primary information sources during the hotel selection process. These digital environments not only affected tourists' perceptions of service quality but also influence trust formation and customer loyalty. Consequently, medium-sized hotels must actively manage their online reputation, maintain transparent communication, and respond promptly to customer feedback in order to remain competitive in digitally mediated tourism markets.

The findings related to Research Objective 2 related to the marketing mix reveal that the product dimension exerted the strongest influence on tourists' intention to stay. Functional comfort, appropriate room size, and essential amenities were prioritized, indicating that tourists expect hotels to meet basic needs efficiently before considering experiential attributes. Price fairness and value for money were also critical, supporting the view that perceived price equity enhances purchasing intention (Manirochana et al., 2021). Moreover, digital distribution and promotion, particularly through online travel agencies, mobile applications, and social media, facilitated information access and increased consumer engagement. Physical evidence, such as cleanliness, interior design, and staff appearance, further reinforced credibility and trust, aligning with previous hospitality research. The insignificant effects of the people and process dimensions may indicate that tourists perceive service interactions in medium-sized hotels as relatively standardized across properties. Therefore, during the hotel selection stage, tourists may place greater emphasis on location, price, and tangible attributes rather than internal service processes.

Interestingly, the people and process dimensions did not show statistically significant effects on tourists' behavioral intention. This finding contrasts with several previous studies that emphasize the importance of frontline staff interaction in hospitality services. One possible explanation is that international tourists visiting Phuket may perceive service interactions among medium-sized hotels as relatively standardized. As a result, during the hotel selection stage, tourists may prioritize more visible attributes such as location, price, and physical facilities rather than internal service processes.

The findings for Research Objective 3 indicate that both tangible and intangible elements significantly influence tourists' intention to stay. Cleanliness, modern facilities, and overall physical appearance created positive first impressions, while assurance, responsiveness, and empathy were critical in fostering trust, satisfaction, and loyalty. These results provide empirical support for the SERVQUAL framework, especially the role of assurance as a predictor of continued service usage. Personalized service delivery, demonstrated through timely assistance and attentive staff behavior, enhanced emotional satisfaction and strengthened behavioral intentions, consistent with earlier studies (Thirathamason & Anusonpanichakul, 2022).



Proposed Integrated Model of Tourist Behavioral Intention in Medium-Sized Hotels

Based on the synthesis of the empirical findings, this study proposes a conceptual model explaining tourists' behavioral intention to stay in medium-sized hotels. Unlike prior studies that examine these constructs separately, the findings demonstrate their interactive role in shaping tourist perceptions and behavioral intentions in a competitive international tourism context.



Figure 2 Presents a proposed integrated model developed from the synthesis of quantitative and qualitative findings.

The results extend service quality theory by showing that perceived service quality encompasses not only tangible attributes, such as cleanliness and physical facilities, but also experiential and relational dimensions formed through consistent service delivery and trustworthy digital communication. Tourists evaluate hotel services through both heuristic and systematic online processes, highlighting the strategic importance of credibility, transparency, and responsiveness in digital platforms prior to service consumption.

Furthermore, the study identifies value co-creation as a central mechanism linking service quality to loyalty. Empathy, proactive service, and real-time problem-solving by frontline staff enable personalized experiences that strengthen emotional connections and long-term commitment. Collectively, these insights advance theoretical understanding and provide strategic implications for enhancing the competitiveness of medium-sized hotels in international tourism destinations.

Conclusion

Both marketing-mix factors and service quality were found to have a strong influence across all dimensions. In particular, the product dimension—emphasizing comfort and efficient space utilization along with pricing that aligns with service quality, accessible online booking channels, effective promotional strategies, and professional physical attributes, play a critical role in shaping customer intention. Furthermore, aspects of service quality such as tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, and empathy significantly contribute to tourist satisfaction and their intention to return. Tourist's value standardized services, attentive staff,



and the hotel's ability to respond to digital consumer behavior, which emphasizes online information search, offer comparison, and service selection based on clear, trustworthy, and value-driven information. As a result, medium-sized hotels in Phuket are well-positioned to build a positive brand image, enhance their competitive advantage, and promote long-term sustainability in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Recommendations

1. Recommendations for applying the research findings

Based on the findings of this study, several practical recommendations can be proposed for hotel operators, particularly medium-sized hotels in Phuket. Since marketing mix elements and service quality jointly influence tourists' intention to stay, hotel operators should adopt an integrated strategy that combines digital marketing, transparent pricing, and consistent service delivery.

First, hotels should strengthen their digital presence on online travel agencies (OTAs) and social media platforms, as these channels are increasingly used by international tourists when searching for accommodation. Providing clear and transparent pricing information, including visible discounts and value-added packages, can enhance customer trust and improve booking decisions. In addition, actively managing online reviews and responding promptly to customer feedback can strengthen hotel credibility and improve perceived service quality. Second, medium-sized hotels should focus on enhancing the functional quality of core products, particularly room comfort, cleanliness, internet connectivity, and practical amenities that support travelers' daily needs. Because medium-sized hotels often compete with larger chains with more extensive facilities, they may differentiate themselves by creating personalized and memorable guest experiences. Third, hotels can develop co-creation experiences that encourage guest participation in service encounters. For example, communal spaces, local cultural activities, or interactive experiences with local communities may allow guests to co-create meaningful travel experiences. Such initiatives can compensate for the limited luxury facilities of medium-sized hotels while strengthening emotional connections between guests and the hotel.

Finally, hotel operators should continue investing in staff development to improve service professionalism, communication skills, and responsiveness. Empowering frontline employees to provide personalized assistance and solve customer problems quickly can significantly enhance service quality and strengthen long-term customer loyalty.

2. Recommendations for future research

Future studies could extend this research in several directions. First, comparative studies across different tourism destinations—such as Chiang Mai, Pattaya, or Bangkok—may



help identify regional differences in tourist preferences and hotel competitiveness. Second, future research may explore emerging accommodation formats, such as boutique hotels, lifestyle hotels, and alternative lodging platforms, in order to broaden the generalizability of the findings. Third, researchers may adopt more advanced methodological approaches to better understand tourist decision-making processes. For example, customer journey mapping could be used to examine how tourists interact with hotels across different stages of the travel experience, from online search to post-stay evaluation. Finally, future studies may incorporate big data analytics, such as analyzing online reviews, social media content, and OTA booking data, to complement survey-based research. Such approaches may provide deeper insights into tourist perceptions and behavior. In addition, the role of emerging technologies—such as artificial intelligence (AI), smart tourism technologies, and sustainability initiatives—should be explored, as these factors are becoming increasingly important in shaping international tourists' accommodation decisions.

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