

The effect of integrated marketing mix model on customer retention

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims at exploring the effect of four elements of an integrated marketing mix. The mix consists of both elements of the 4Ps and SIVA marketing models. These elements are product-solution, promotion-information, place-access, and price-value. A questionnaire was used to collect the required data from a sample of retailing market customers in Saudi Arabia. The total number of the questionnaires used in data analysis was 378. The study found that product-solution and place-access from customers' perspective had significant effects on customer retention. On the other hand, price-value had a negative significant effect on customer retention, while promotion-information had no effect on customer retention. Hence, companies are called for considering products as solutions, promotion as a source of information for customers, place as an access point for such a solution, and price must be appropriate to the value that the customer gets.

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1. Introduction

Components of marketing mix should not only reflect the way in which organizations think to satisfy customer demands but also customer problems, customer decisions, product availability as well as the perceived value of such products. Reviewing the literature on marketing mix, one can find numerous suggested models in this regard. The 4ps Model, which stands for product, promotion, place and price, is the most popular one (Vynogradova & Drokina, 2020; Al Oraini, 2024). In front of the 4Ps model, there was the SIVA model, which refers to four components of marketing mix: solution, information, value and access. According to Teo, Srivastava and Ho (2006), the SIVA model presumed that customers prefer solutions to their problems rather than just products, information to make their decisions rather than promotions, a justified value for their purchase, and access for those solutions. Considerable attention has been paid to the traditional model (i.e., 4Ps) and SIVA model (Chaikovska & Chaikovskiy, 2018). The 4Ps is an example of business-oriented marketing mix while SIVA is an example of customer-oriented marketing mix (Gustafsson & Gustavsson, 2013, Mohammad et al., 2023). The current study merges between the two models in order to show that relying on the traditional model of the marketing mix is not sufficient. Rather, it is necessary to rely on another model that covers a new point of view in proposing and implementing the marketing mix. At the same time, the traditional model is not being abandoned. This involves using the components of the traditional model to fulfill the requirements of the new model. One of the most important topics that researchers addressed was that related to customer retention. Many companies were able to market their products and reach the target market, but few were able to retain their customers. Customer retention is a key result

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of the continuous interest in customer preferences and thus ensuring loyalty to the company represented by the repeated purchase of its products (Chelliah et al., 2013; Oraini, 2024). On the relationship between marketing mix and customer retention, prior works found significant association between some of the marketing mix elements and customer retention (Han et al., 2019).

The problem of this study lies in the necessity to uncover the effect of merging the four elements model (i.e., 4Ps) with the SIVA model on customer retention. Consequently, it aims at exploring the effect of 4Ps-SIVA marketing mix on customer retention. Finding a solution to this problem is of great importance, as organizations benefit from employing their marketing mix based on the four elements to gain and maintain customers by adopting the SIVA model. Perhaps one of the most important implications of the study is that it shows that organizations must apply modern marketing models while preserving their previous marketing efforts to gender customer long-term commitment or in other words customer loyalty.

The paper is structured into six sections. The next one contains a review of the literature on marketing mix models, i.e., 4Ps and SIVA models as well as customer retention in order to develop research hypotheses. Section three highlights the methodology of the study, which was used to achieve the objectives of the study. Section four shows the empirical results of the study and contains a discussion of those results. Section five presents the conclusion of the study and its implications. Finally, section six reports limitations and future work directions.

2. Literature review and hypotheses development

Marketing has been seen using different lenses. Two important perspectives of marketing are organizational and customer perspectives. Reporting the definition of the American Marketing Association, Vishnoi et al. (2018) indicated that marketing from the organizational perspective refers to activities and processes followed by organizations to create and deliver value added offers for customers, partners and society. A considerable attention has been paid to a critical element in the marketing context, which is marketing mix. For Kotler (2008), marketing mix refers to some tactical instruments that an organization blends to yield the response in the market.

In 1960, McCarthy proposed the most popular marketing mix entitled the 4Ps or product, promotion, place and price marketing mix. The product represents both goods and services delivered to customers, while promotion serves as a communication path between an organization and its customers. Place acts as a point between the producer and the customer. Finally, price refers to the total cost that the customer incurred to acquire and use the products (Nuseir & Madanat, 2015). In 2005, Dev and Schultz introduced another marketing model named SIVA, which is an abbreviation of four words: solution, information, value and access (Vishnoi et al., 2018).The model typifies a customer-oriented approach, in which customers receive not only products but also solutions to their problems, information rather than promotion, value in favor of pricing, and access to reach such solutions (Gordon, 2012). Integrating both 4Ps and SIVA models shifts organizations to another level of marketing efforts directed to customers. According to Vynogradova and Drokina (2020), the aim of the product is to solve customer problems. Regarding the effect of the first element of the marketing mix in this study, which is product-solution, Chelliah et al. (2013) found that product attributes had a significant role in ensuring customer retention.

For Han et al. (2019), product performance plays a significant role in customer retention. Ameur, Keltouma and Souar (2015) examined the impact of marketing mix elements, i.e., product, price, place, promotion, process, people, and physical evidence on customer loyalty in Algeria Telecom Company and found that three elements, which were product, promotion and process, had significant effects on customer loyalty. Bahri-Ammari and Bilgihan (2019) found that customer loyalty is one significant predictor of customer retention. In terms of handling customer problems, Ang and Buttle (2006) indicated that excellence at customer retention could be facilitated through the process of customer complaint handling. One of the objectives of the current study is to explore the effect of an integrated element of marketing mix, which is product-solution as extracted from the 4Ps and SIVA models, on customer retention, hence, hypothesis H1 as can be seen in Fig. 1 was introduced:

H₁: *Product-solution has a significant effect on customer retention.*



Fig. 1. Hypothesis 1

On the other hand, the basis of the information required by customers to make their own decisions is embedded in one component of the marketing mix, which is promotion (Vynogradova & Drokina, 2020). Promotion was deemed as a key element of the 4Ps model (Nuseir & Madanat, 2015) and information was regarded as a principal element in the SIVA model (Vynogradova & Drokina, 2020). Van Riel et al. (2005) confirmed that the critical role of promotion as an element of marketing mix is to provide buyers with information, which in turn affects their buying decisions. Promotional activities had been found to be a key dimension of customer retention (Chelliah et al., 2013, Shaqrah et al., 2023). In a study by Andreti et al. (2013) on

the effect of the four elements of the 4Ps marketing mix and service quality on customer buying decisions, it was revealed that promotion has a significant effect on customer buying decisions. In the current study, the intended promotion is the one that advances customer information. To investigate the effect of promotion-information on customer retention as shown in figure 2, the following hypothesis was recommended:

H₂: *Promotion-information has a significant effect on customer retention.*

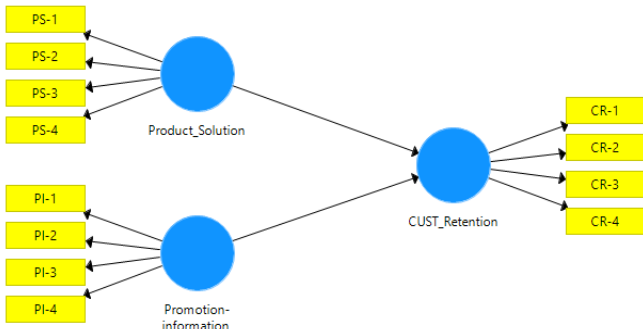


Fig. 2. Hypotheses 1 and 2

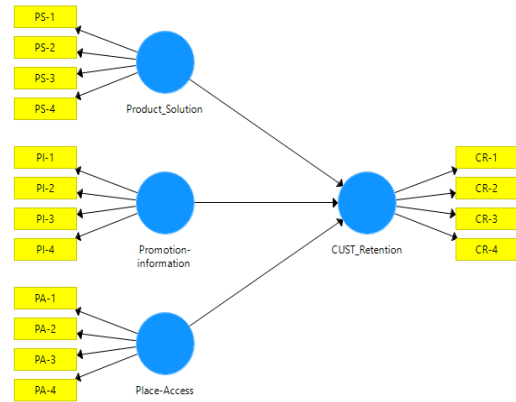


Fig. 3. Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3

Place in the marketing mix in fact stands for the access point of the product (Vynogradova & Drokina, 2020). According to the SIVA model, customers prefer an access point to be able to get the solutions that the products have (Gordon, 2012). Investigating the impact of 7Ps marketing mix, Hossain et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of product, place, people, and process in retaining customers. Place as a store location was found to be a pivotal factor for customer retention (Hanaysha, 2017). To identify the effect of place-access as an element of the marketing mix on customer retention, the following hypothesis was postulated:

H₃: *Place-access has a significant effect on customer retention.*

Price reflects the value of the product (Vynogradova & Drokina, 2020). Other studies (e.g., Bagram & Khan, 2012) indicated that customer perceived value is one of the most significant factors affecting customer retention. Hereof, the customer must be aware of the value he gets for the price he pays, the benefits that the product offers him, the reward he gets, and the sacrifice that he makes. Animashaun et al. (2016) divided customer value into five categories: functional value, emotional value, social value, conditional value, and economic value. The last one refers to the price of the product. According to their results, the perceived economic value had a significant effect on customer loyalty and retention. In order to explore the effect of price-value on customer retention using the current data, the following hypothesis as portrayed in Figure 4, was presumed:

H₄: *Price-value has a significant effect on customer retention.*

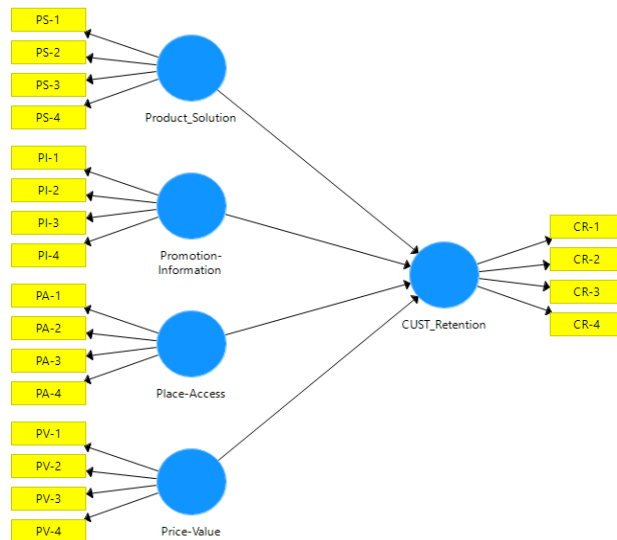


Fig. 4. Hypotheses 1-4

3. Methodology

The study utilized the descriptive analytical method to achieve its objectives. The sample of the study comprised 500 customers of retail markets in Saudi Arabia. Data was collected using a questionnaire developed for the purpose of this study. Five hundred questionnaires were distributed via the Internet to sample members. There were 378 questionnaires after 4 days of data collection with a response rate of 75.6%. In terms of the measures used to assess research variables, the elements of the marketing mix were measured using 16 items as shown in Table 1, while customer retention was measured using 4 items.

Table 1
Items of the questionnaire

| Variables | Code | Items | References |
|-----------------------|------|---|---|
| Product-solution | PS-1 | The product in the market fits my needs | Dann (2011); Sudari et al. (2019); Okeudo (2013); Islam and Rahman (2015) |
| | PS-2 | Solutions offered by the products solve my problems | |
| | PS-3 | I only buy products that meet my needs | |
| | PS-4 | Solutions offered by products must be accepted by community | |
| Promotion-Information | PI-1 | Products are promoted by demonstrating their uses | Dann (2011);Sudari et al. (2019); Islam and Rahman (2015) |
| | PI-2 | I have sufficient information about the products | |
| | PI-3 | Promotion information helps me make a purchasing decision | |
| | PI-4 | I trust the information included in product promotion | |
| Place-Access | PA-1 | I can access products effortlessly | Al-Qarni et al. (2013); Dann (2011); Islam and Rahman (2015) |
| | PA-2 | Free product delivery service is provided | |
| | PA-3 | I can access products at all times | |
| | PA-4 | It's easy to get the right products in the right place | |
| Price-Value | PV-1 | Often, the price I pay is higher than the value I get | Pourdehghan (2015); Mahmoud (2018) |
| | PV-2 | I care about the price of the product a lot | |
| | PV-3 | I have to make sacrifices in order to get the product | |
| | PV-4 | I ignore the price if the value of the product is high | |
| Customer retention | CR-1 | Some products are my first choice | Almohaimmeed (2019) |
| | CR-2 | I recommend others to try some products | |
| | CR-3 | I mention the advantages of the products that I like | |
| | CR-4 | I plan to continue using some products | |

4. Empirical results and discussion

The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS and SmartPLS programs to achieve the following goals: conducting the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), performing descriptive statistics, extracting the correlation matrix, and testing research hypotheses.

First, the results of EFA as shown in Table 2 show that the first element, i.e., product-solution (PS) was loaded on 4 items with factor loadings ranged from 0.640 to 0.919, product-information (PI) was loaded also on 4 items with factor loadings between 0.523 and 0.910. The fourth element, which is place-value (PA) had 4 factors with factor loadings greater than 0.879. Price-value (PV) was loaded on 4 items displayed factor loadings from 0.754 and 0.909. Finally, it was found that customer retention (Cust-Retention) had 4 factors with loadings higher than 0.758.

Table 2
Results of outer loadings

| Items | PS | PI | PA | PV | CR |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| PS-1 | 0.640 | | | | |
| PS-2 | 0.861 | | | | |
| PS-3 | 0.919 | | | | |
| PS-4 | 0.791 | | | | |
| PI-1 | | 0.523 | | | |
| PI-2 | | 0.910 | | | |
| PI-3 | | 0.902 | | | |
| PI-4 | | 0.887 | | | |
| PA-1 | | | 0.950 | | |
| PA-2 | | | 0.961 | | |
| PA-3 | | | 0.952 | | |
| PA-4 | | | 0.879 | | |
| PV-1 | | | | 0.909 | |
| PV-2 | | | | 0.887 | |
| PV-3 | | | | 0.835 | |
| PV-4 | | | | 0.754 | |
| CR-1 | | | | | 0.758 |
| CR-2 | | | | | 0.882 |
| CR-3 | | | | | 0.878 |
| CR-4 | | | | | 0.765 |

PS: Product-Solution, PI: Product-Information, PA: Place-Access, PV: Price-Value, CR: Cust.-Retention.

Second, the results of reliability and validity as can be seen in Table 3 indicate that reliability and validity values were accepted. Cronbach's alpha values (α) should be greater than 0.70 (Abdul Rahman & Miab, 2020, Al-Alwan et al., 2022), composite reliability values (CR) should be higher than 0.70 (Ibrahim et al., 2020, Pallathadka et al., 2023) and average variance

extracted (AVE) should be more than 0.50 (Triwidyati & Tentama, 2020; Mohammad et al., 2024). The results of collinearity statistics as measured by the inner values of the variance inflation factor (VIF) indicated that the VIF threshold was met since the values were below 5 (Sakinah et al., 2020).

Table 3
Results of reliability and validity

| Constructs | VIF | α | CR | AVE |
|-----------------------|-------|----------|-------|-------|
| Product-Solution | 1.045 | 0.817 | 0.882 | 0.655 |
| Promotion-Information | 1.006 | 0.825 | 0.889 | 0.676 |
| Place-Access | 1.049 | 0.952 | 0.966 | 0.876 |
| Price-Value | 1.002 | 0.869 | 0.911 | 0.720 |
| Cust.-Retention | - | 0.840 | 0.893 | 0.677 |

In terms of model fit indices, the results in Table 3 illustrate that the value of Chi-square = 304.846, Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = 0.070, while the model Fit Index (NFI) = 0.974 and RMS Theta = 0.188. According to Cangur and Ercan (2015), SRMR value is accepted when its value is smaller than 0.10. Gyimah (2020) indicated that the value of NFI should be greater than 0.90. Finally, the value of RMS theta should be below 0.12 (Mira, Choong and Thim, 2019).

Finally, the results of hypothesis testing, as shown in Fig. 5, confirmed that the value of R-square is moderate ($R^2 = 0.321$). Another measure used to assess PLS mode is the predictive relevance (Q^2). Valentika (2020) argued that the value of the predictive relevance should be greater than zero. For the current study, the model showed an acceptable level of predictive relevance. The results are demonstrated in Table 4.

Table 4
Results of PLS mode predictive relevance

| Constructs | SSO | SSE | Q^2 |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|-------|
| Product-Solution | 392.000 | 392.000 | 0.186 |
| Promotion-Information | 392.000 | 392.000 | |
| Place-Access | 392.000 | 392.000 | |
| Price-Value | 392.000 | 392.000 | |
| Cust.-Retention | 392.000 | 318.964 | |

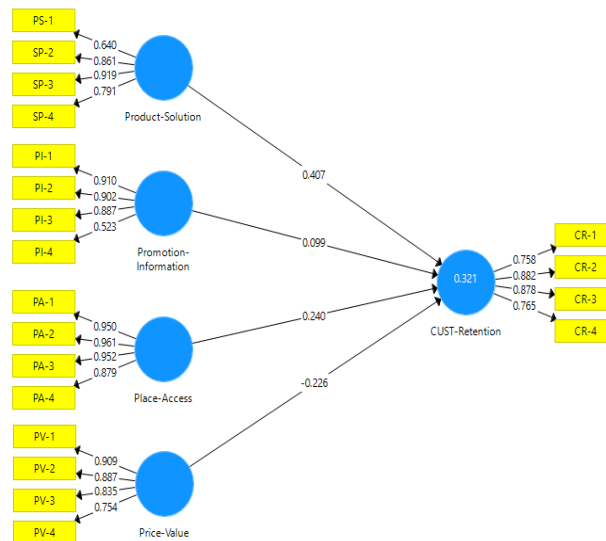


Fig. 5. Research final model

Regarding the results of hypothesis testing, it was noted as can be seen in Table 5 that Product-Solution shows a significant effect on customer retention ($\beta = 0.407$, $t = 4.99$, $P = 0.000$). Promotion-Information had no significant effect on customer retention ($\beta = 0.099$, $t = 0.881$, $P = 0.379$). Place-Value, on the other hand, showed a significant effect on customer retention ($\beta = 0.240$, $t = 2.877$, $P = 0.004$). Finally, the results revealed that Price-Value had a negative significant effect on customer retention ($\beta = -0.226$, $t = 2.506$, $P = 0.013$).

Table 5
Results of hypotheses testing

| Constructs and paths | Original sample | Sample mean | Standard deviation | T statistics | P-Values |
|----------------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------------|--------------|----------|
| PS → CR | 0.407 | 0.410 | 0.081 | 4.99 | 0.000 |
| PI → CR | 0.099 | 0.109 | 0.112 | 0.881 | 0.379 |
| PA → CR | 0.240 | 0.234 | 0.083 | 2.877 | 0.004 |
| PV → CR | -0.226 | -0.237 | 0.090 | 2.506 | 0.013 |

Based on the above-mentioned results, three hypotheses (H1, H3 and H4) were supported and one hypothesis (H2) was rejected, which means that three elements of the studied marketing mix, i.e., product-solution, place-access, and price-value had significant effects on customer retention.

Such results were not found in the literature, and this is because researchers do not address this marketing mix, which represents an integration between the traditional marketing mix (4Ps) and SIVA model. Nevertheless, products were found to trigger customer retention (Chelliah et al., 2013) and these products represent solutions to customers' problems (Han et al., 2019; Vynogradova & Drokina, 2020, Abusalma et al., 2024). Moreover, promotion as a key element in the traditional marketing mix (Nuseir & Madanat, 2015) plays a significant role in retaining customers (Chelliah et al., 2013). It should be noted that the aim of promotion is to provide customers with information helping them to make their buying decisions (Van Riel, De Mortanges & Streukens, 2005). The third element of the traditional marketing mix, which is place, was regarded as a key factor when firms seek to retain customers (Hanaysha, 2017; Hossain et al., 2020). Finally, the price that the customer pays helps the company retain its customers, but the price is required to be appropriate compared to the value that the customer gets (Bagram & Khan, 2012; Animashaun, Tunkarimu & ad Dastane, 2016, Boudlaie et al., 2022).

5. Conclusion, implications, and recommendations

The aim of this study was to explore the effect of an integrated marketing mix consisting of the elements of the traditional 4Ps and SIVA model on customer retention. Four elements were considered: product-solution, promotion-information, place-access, and price-value. The importance of the current study is that it is the first in terms of examining the effect of these elements on customer retention. The results of the study showed that the variable (product-solution) has a statistically significant effect on customer retention, from customers' viewpoint. This means that customers are looking for products that provide a solution to their problems. Promotion-information, according to the current results, had no significant effect on customer retention; this means that companies are providing inappropriate promotional content to customers. The important element in the integrated marketing mix is place-access, as the results of the study showed the presence of a significant effect of this element on customer retention. As for the price and value variable, the results showed from customers' point of view the existence of a statistically significant effect of this variable on customer retention, but it was negative.

There are a number of important implications that can be drawn from the findings of the study. First, customers are initially interested in products that solve the problems they face. For example, if the customer suffers from a wheat allergy, he seeks to obtain products that help him avoid this type of allergy. Another example, if the customer is busy and does not have enough time to go to his favorite restaurant, the delivery service represents a solution to his problem. Accordingly, companies should view products as solutions to customers' problems, because this leads to achieving customers' desires, earning their loyalty, and retaining them.

Second, the goal of product promotion is no longer to inform customers about the existence of these products or to publish the latest offers offered by the company, but rather to give the customer more information that assures him that this product solves his problems, and that also helps him to make a purchasing decision. It has been observed that many companies these days focus on using all possible means of promotion through which to reach customers, but they do not pay much attention to the promotional content. Therefore, companies should focus on promotional content so that it includes useful information for customers to encourage them to buy the company's products.

Third, there is a significant effect of the place-access component. It should be noted here that the place is not an abstract physical thing, but rather represents the accessibility of products or solutions to customers. For this reason, companies have to deal with the place as one of the components of the marketing mix that helps the customer to reach the products. This means that the place may be physical or virtual. Through this, it can be understood that the appropriate market place is no longer important if the customer is unable to reach it. More importantly, this place represents a point for the customer to obtain the aforementioned solutions.

Finally, the price that the customer pays to obtain the product must equal the value that the customer gets. This is important for retaining customers. According to the results of the current study, the most negative factor in the marketing mix is price, if this price is higher than the value guaranteed by the products. Consequently, companies should review the value that products provide to customers and the relevance of that value to the price paid.

Based on the foregoing results, we conclude that traditional marketing has evolved greatly. The most prominent feature of this development is the definition of the elements of the marketing mix. Previously, the product was something that the company produces and sells to customers in order to meet his needs. However, changes in the desires, preferences and requirements of customers have led to the emergence of new needs that are different from the traditional needs, so the product today has become a way to solve problems faced by customers. Promotion has become a way to provide valuable information to the customer about the product that helps him choose the product that represents the most appropriate solution to his problems. In addition to that, it is necessary that the customer be able to access these solutions and that the value of these solutions is identical to the price paid.

6. Limitation and future work directions

This study is limited to its sample, which consisted of customers of retailing market. Therefore, further studies are required to investigate the impact of the same elements of the current marketing mix on customer retention using data from other

industries. The dependent variable of this study is customer retention. New studies are required to examine the effect of such marketing elements on other customer outcomes like customer engagement, customer empowerment, customer relationship management, as well as customer profitability.

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