The Influence of 7Ps on Brand Loyalty of Elderly Tourists in Hunan Province of China to Travel Agencies Operating Tours into Thailand

Chunfang Dai and Lu Suo
Stamford International University,Thailand
Corresponding Author, Email: 2010210006@students.stamford.edu

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Abstract

The research objectives of this paper are as follows: 1) To analyze the influencing factors of Chinese elderly tourists to Thailand on the brand loyalty of travel agencies; 2) The 7Ps theory is used to analyze how to influence the brand loyalty of Chinese elderly tourists to travel agencies through travel experience. The sample is a group of elderly tourists aged 60 and above from Hunan Province, China who went to Thailand. The data of 423 valid questionnaires were collected by cluster sampling and snowball sampling. This paper uses structural equation model (SEM) to analyze the relationship between 7Ps, travel experience and travel agency brand loyalty. The results show that: 1) 7Ps has a significant positive impact on the travel experience of elderly tourists. ; 2) The travel experience of elderly tourists has a significant positive impact on the brand loyalty of Thai travel agencies; 3)7PS has a significant positive impact on the brand loyalty of Thai elderly tourists to travel agencies; 4) The travel experience of elderly tourists plays an intermediary role between 7PS and the brand loyalty of Thai elderly tourists to travel agencies. This study provides academic knowledge and practical enlightenment for tourism enterprises in Thailand, and provides insights for improving the brand loyalty of elderly tourists by effectively utilizing the 7p framework and improving the travel experience of elderly tourists. The study finally fills a key gap in the existing literature and provides valuable guidance to tourism sector stakeholders.

Keywords: The Influence of 7PS; Brand loyalty; Elderly Tourist; Travel Agencies

This study analyze the components of the 7Ps service marketing framework tailored to Chinese elderly tourists in Thailand, and explore how these factors impact brand loyalty. The paper established a link between the 7Ps (Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Physical Evidence, Process) and brand loyalty among elderly tourists from Hunan Province, China, who have engaged in group travel to Thailand.Methodologically, the study employed a questionnaire survey targeting elderly individuals aged 60 and above from Hunan Province who have traveled in groups to Thailand. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was utilized to analyze the relationships between the 7Ps, intermediary variables such as travel experience, and brand loyalty towards travel agencies.Hypotheses are formulated to test these relationships, asserting significant impacts of each 7P element on travel experience and subsequent brand loyalty.The scope of the study is delineated to focus exclusively on elderly tourists from Hunan Province, China, with a strategic emphasis on empirical analysis and theoretical depth. The aim is to contribute to both academic knowledge and practical

implications for tourism enterprises operating in Thailand, providing insights into enhancing brand loyalty among elderly tourists through effective utilization of the 7Ps framework. The study ultimately filled critical gaps in existing literature and offer valuable guidance for stakeholders in the tourism sector.

Introduction

The global population is rapidly aging, with the number and proportion of older people increasing almost everywhere. By 2050, China will have 380 million people over the age of 65, accounting for 27.9 percent of the total population. If 60 years of age and above are taken as the standard of elderly population, the number of elderly people in China will reach 500 million by 2050.In the context of increasing aging, the global tourism industry has ushered in a new peak of development. A relatively strong global economy, innovative technologies and business models, a growing middle class in emerging economies, lower travel costs and easier visa procedures have led to a growing number of tourists, with total global travel arrivals reaching 12.31 billion in 2019 and global tourism revenues reaching $5.8 trillion. China's total number of tourists reached 6.306 billion, and the annual tourism revenue reached 6.63 trillion yuan (Statista, 2020).Under the background of aging, the global tourism industry has ushered in a new development peak. A relatively strong global economy, innovative technologies and business models, lower travel costs and easier visa procedures have led to an increasing number of elderly Chinese tourists to Thailand.

A large number of studies have shown that brand loyalty is of great significance to tourism enterprises. Yue,K.Y., Chen,H.F. & Zhang W.R. (2022) tested the causal relationship between brand identity, brand loyalty and repurchase intention by investigating the elderly population. Chen (2010) & Huang,Fu,C. (2011) use "re-visit intention" and "recommendation intention" to measure tourist loyalty, while Yuan,B.H. (2016) defines brand loyalty as consumers' love and attachment to a specific destination, which is represented by recommendation and re-visit. Although there are few researches on the influencing factors of brand loyalty, Jiang, L.Y.(2011) analyzed that travel agencies should adopt reasonable promotion measures, establish brand image, pay attention to after-sales service, and cultivate loyal customers. Based on the 7Ps theory, Song Y.(2022) proposed strategies for the tourism development of Luchun County, emphasizing the importance of effective marketing to enhance brand image and attractiveness. The research of N Ray (2017) shows that the products, prices, promotions, channels and personnel in the 7Ps theory have a positive impact on the development of rural tourism, while the tangible display and process have a smaller impact. As for the relationship between travel experience and brand loyalty, Murray and Kline (2015) pointed out that tourists' satisfaction is an important factor affecting brand loyalty, while An,S.W.(2006) emphasized the impact of actual experience on tourist loyalty. Subsequent studies show that there is a positive relationship between 7Ps marketing mix and brand loyalty, and the influence is exerted through customer satisfaction (Baig et al., 2020; Nuryadin et al., 2021). These studies provide theoretical support for understanding the brand loyalty of tourists, especially Chinese elderly tourists.

Through the above research, it is not difficult to find that there are few researches on travel agencies' elderly tourism to Thailand, especially on the influencing factors of the formation of brand loyalty. There is a lack of empirical analysis on the influence of 7PS on the brand loyalty of travel agencies in Thailand. Therefore, this study finally fills the key gaps in the existing literature and provides valuable guidance and suggestions for tourism

enterprises.

Research Objective

This paper investigates the elderly population in Hunan Province who are over 60 years old and have experienced group travel to Thailand by way of questionnaire survey. By using structural equation model analysis, the correlation between 7Ps, intermediary variables and the loyalty of elderly tourists to the brand of travel agencies in Thailand is analyzed. The intermediary variable is the travel experience of Chinese elderly tourists to Thailand. Analysis together to achieve the following research objectives:

1) What factors affect the brand loyalty of Chinese elderly tourists to travel agencies in Thailand; 2) How does 7PS influence the brand loyalty of elderly tourists to travel agencies through travel experience?

The purpose of this study is to clarify the mechanism of how 7PS affects the travel experience of elderly tourists and the brand loyalty of elderly tourists to travel agencies in Thailand. The ultimate goal is to provide travel agencies with actionable suggestions on tourism marketing strategies for Chinese elderly tourists to Thailand.

Literature Review

7Ps

Jerome McCarthy(1960),a professor at Michigan State University in the United States, wrote a book called "Basic Marketing.In the book, the elements of marketing are roughly divided into four categories: Product, Price, and price.Promotion, Place. Twenty years later, Boom and Buettner(1981)added the three important elements of People, Physical evidence and Process on the basis of the4Ps.

Brand loyalty

Bekir et al. (2019) measured the willingness to recommend items such as "I will tell other people positive information about Alanya", "I encourage my friends and relatives to visit Alanya" and "I will recommend Alanya to people planning holidays". Regarding re-examining intentions, the questions mainly included "I would like to revisit Alanya in the near future", "I will visit Alanya more frequently" and "Alanya would be my first choice in other destinations".

7Ps and Travel experience

Wang,Y.C.,Wang,Y.H., &Zhang,Y. (2020) analyzed marketing strategies in experiential tourism by using 7Ps theory, providing theoretical support for experiential tourism marketing. This suggests that the 7Ps theory can be effectively applied in experiential tourism marketing to help destinations better understand tourists' needs and expectations and provide better experiences. BW Zhu (2002) proposes a positioning model, emphasizes the importance of marketing experience, and discusses some cases about marketing experience. This shows that experiential marketing is an effective strategy to attract potential customers and boost brand image. J.R.Brent Ritchie & Simon Hudson(2009) describe the rebranding movement in Canada, which emphasizes marketing strategies based on visitor experience.（H_1-H_7）

Travel experience and brand loyalty

An Shiwei (2006) proposed that after tourists experience a certain tourism product, if the actual experience of tourists is greater than the ideal expectation of tourists, tourists will get emotional satisfaction, and they will have a high sense of trust in the destination, and are willing to recommend the destination to others, and will consider the destination again in the future. This is tourist loyalty. Kim & Moon (2009) showed that in a themed restaurant environment, customer experience pleasure as an emotional response is positively correlated with repeated purchase behavior of the brand. Jang & Namkung (2009) pointed out that restaurant customers' sense of experience positively affects their behavioral intention. The literature indicates that a positive travel experience significantly contributes to brand loyalty. （H_8）

7Ps and brand loyalty

Zeng,H.,& Hao,L. (2015) explored the impact of different promotion expressions on brand loyalty, and the results showed that full reduction promotion had a greater impact on brand loyalty than full gift promotion.

Baig, Mirza Wajahat, Qamar, Shahrukh, Fatima, Tatheer, Khan, Abdul Mannan, Ahmed, Muzzamil (2020) Used SPSS software for obtaining demographics summary and SMART PLS to analyze the effect of Marketing Mix and Customer Value on Customer Loyalty. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analyses show that there is a positive and significant relationship between marketing mix and customer loyalty and between customer value and customer loyalty The findings suggest that to attain customers' loyalty, sellers should offer those products or services which they believe are truly needed by customers.

Nuryadin,A., Mahfudnurnajamuddin, Hasan,S. . (2021)The results of this study show that marketing mix (7p) has a significant positive impact on customer loyalty. Marketing mix (7p) has a positive impact on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction.Effective application of the 7Ps can drive customer satisfaction, which in turn enhances loyalty. This suggests that a well-structured marketing mix tailored to customer preferences and needs is essential for fostering long-term loyalty. （H_9-H_{15}）

The integration of the 7Ps with customer experience and brand loyalty leads to valuable insights for marketers in the tourism industry. It reinforces the idea that a comprehensive understanding of marketing strategies sensitive to the experiential aspects of tourism can lead to higher customer satisfaction and loyalty. Marketers are encouraged to prioritize customer experience and deploy the 7Ps effectively to engage consumers and build lasting relationships.In summary, the interplay between the 7Ps of marketing, travel experiences, and brand loyalty is critical for attracting and retaining customers in the tourism sector. Leveraging these elements effectively can lead to improved customer satisfaction and loyalty, positively impacting destination branding and marketing success.

Based on these observations, the Conceptual Framework and following hypothesis is proposed in this study:
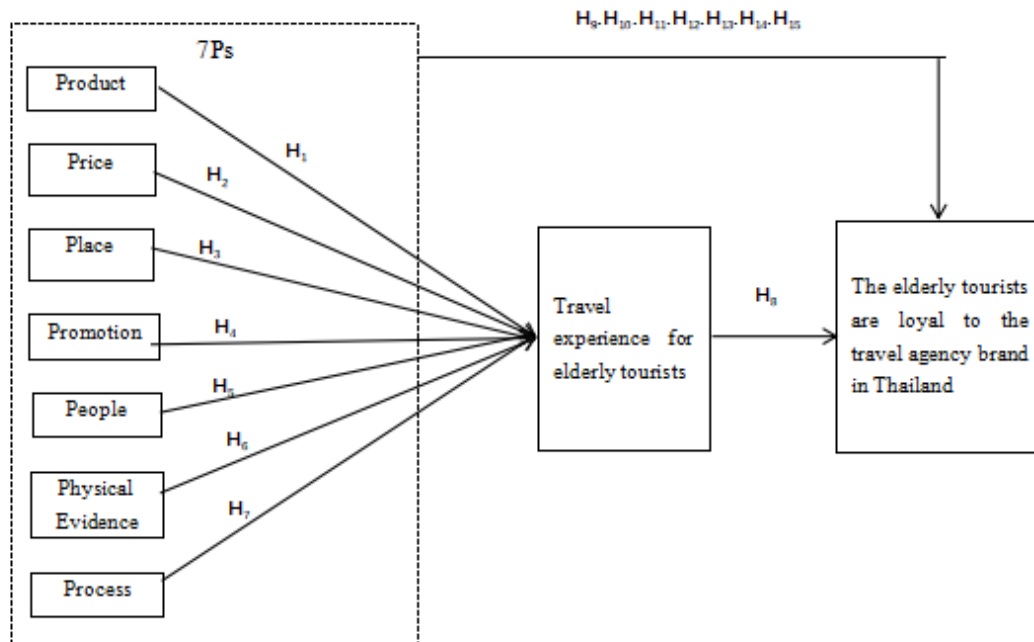
H1: Produce has a significant impact on the travel experience of elderly tourists to Thailand;

H2: Price has a significant impact on the travel experience of elderly tourists to Thailand;

H3: Place has a significant impact on the travel experience of elderly tourists to Thailand;

H4: Promotion has a significant impact on the travel experience of elderly tourists to Thailand;

H5: People have a significant impact on the travel experience of elderly tourists to Thailand;

H6: Physical Evidence has a significant impact on the travel experience of elderly tourists to Thailand;

H7: Process has a significant impact on the travel experience of elderly tourists to Thailand;

H8: The sense of travel experience of elderly tourists to Thailand has a significant impact on the brand loyalty of travel agencies to Thailand.

H9: Product has a significant impact on the brand loyalty of elderly tourists to travel agencies in Thailand;

H10: Price has a significant impact on the brand loyalty of travel agencies in Thailand;

H11: Place has a significant impact on the brand loyalty of elderly tourists to travel agencies in Thailand;

H12: Promotion has a significant impact on the brand loyalty of travel agencies in Thailand among elderly tourists;

H_{13}: People have a significant impact on the brand loyalty of elderly tourists to travel agencies in Thailand;

H_{14}: Physical Evidence has a significant impact on the brand loyalty of elderly tourists to travel agencies in Thailand;

H_{15}: Process has a significant impact on the brand loyalty of elderly tourists to travel agencies in Thailand.

Research Methodology

Research methods

This article uses quantitative research method to design relevant questions about each indicator based on literature reading and reference to relevant scales.In the process of formal investigation, the questionnaire was formally issued.

Population and sample group

This paper takes the elderly population of Hunan Province who are over 60 years old and have group travel experience to Thailand as the main research object. Through investigation and research on the research objects, combined with the research purpose of this paper, It can be concluded that the research scope of this paper includes three parts: elderly tourists in Hunan Province over 60 years old who have group travel experience to Thailand, 7Ps and the brand loyalty of elderly tourists to travel agencies in Thailand. Among them, 7Ps includes seven aspects: product, price, channel, promotion, people, tangible display and process, and the brand loyalty of Hunan elderly tourists to travel agencies in Thailand. Other factors related to 7Ps and brand loyalty are outside the scope of this paper

Through issuing closed questionnaires and collecting data, questionnaires were distributed to the elderly population of Hunan Province who were over 60 years old and had group travel experience. Using cluster sampling method and snowball sampling method, 460questionnaires were sent out, the recovery rate was 92 %, and423valid questionnaires were collected.

Research tools

Through pilot test, the reliability and validity of the questionnaire were tested.Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to measure the reliability of the questionnaire.The validity of the questionnaire includes content validity and structure validity. The content validity is tested by item-goal consistency index, and the Construct validity was tested using exploratory factor analysis(EFA)Because all the scales used are mature scales, IOC was not conducted.

The data were summarized and sorted out, and descriptive statistical analysis was used to analyze the relevant information of the survey objects. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to analyze the reliability of the formal survey data. The validity of formal survey data was tested by exploratory factor analysis(EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis(CFA).We use path analysis to prove the hypotheses.

The questionnaire consists of four parts: 7Ps, travel experience of elderly tourists, brand loyalty and demographic characteristics.

1. The independent variable is 7Ps. For its measurement, there are 7 variables, namely product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence and process, 37 items.

2. The dependent variable is the brand loyalty of elderly tourists to travel agencies in Thailand. The elderly population of Hunan Province who are over 60 years old and have the experience of group travel to Thailand, their brand loyalty includes 4 items from

attitude and behavior.

　　　　　3. The intermediary variable is the travel experience of Chinese elderly tourists to Thailand. Its evaluation index is divided into 6.

Table 1 Dimensions and item numbers of each variable

Variable name	Item number	Dimension of item measurement
7Ps		7Ps
Product	Product1-Product5	
Price	Price1-Price5	
Place	Place1-Place4	
Promotion	Promotion1-Promotion5	Pattanapong Chana.Supaprawat Siripipatthanakul.Wasutida Nurittamont.
People	People1-People6	Bordin Phayaphrom(2021)
Physical Evidence	pe1-pe6	
Process	Process1-Process6	
Travel experience	TEET1-TEET6	Martina G. Gallarza and Irene Gil(2008)
Brand loyalty	BL1-BL4	Lee H S(2013)

　　　　　With the primary research method employed being a questionnaire survey,which has passed STIU-HREC057/2024 certification.

Research Scope

　　　　　This paper takes the elderly population of Hunan Province who are over 60 years old and have group travel experience to Thailand as the main research object. Through investigation and research on the research objects, combined with the research purpose of this paper, It can be concluded that the research scope of this paper includes three parts: elderly tourists in Hunan Province over 60 years old who have group travel experience to Thailand, 7Ps and the brand loyalty of elderly tourists to travel agencies in Thailand. Among them, 7Ps includes seven aspects: product, price, channel, promotion, people, tangible display and process, and the brand loyalty of Hunan elderly tourists to travel agencies in Thailand. Other factors related to 7Ps and brand loyalty are outside the scope of this paper.

Research results

Data analysis

Descriptive Analysis

　　　　　By analyzing 423 valid questionnaires, this study provides descriptive statistics on key variables for the elderly population. Most fall in the 66-70 age range (38.53%), with balanced gender distribution. Majority are married (70.69%), rural residents (67.38%), and have lower education levels. Income sources include children's support (39.72%). Preferences lean towards health activities (25.53%) in tourism. Travel companions are mostly friends (26.48%), then spouses (24.35%) and children (21.28%). Some prefer peers (20.09%) or solo travel (7.80%).

Reliability and Validity Assessment

　　　　　In this study，Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to analyze the reliability of the formal survey data.The data were rotated using the varimax method (maximum variance rotation) to identify the relationship between factors and research items. Through the

information extraction status of factors for the research items, as well as the corresponding relationship between factors and research items. A strong association between the research items and factors, and that the factors can effectively extract information.

Table 2 Factor load coefficient

Factor	Item	(Coef.)	Std. Error	CR value	p	Std. Estimate	SMC□	AVE	CR
Product	Product1	1	-	-	-	0.864	0.747	0.578	0.872
	Product2	0.64	0.041	15.522	0	0.688	0.473		
	Product3	0.69	0.039	17.529	0	0.753	0.566		
	Product4	0.71	0.04	17.863	0	0.763	0.582		
	Product5	0.658	0.04	16.522	0	0.721	0.52		
Price	price1	1	-	-	-	0.893	0.797	0.599	0.881
	price2	0.717	0.037	19.4	0	0.779	0.606		
	price3	0.634	0.037	17.05	0	0.715	0.511		
	price4	0.675	0.038	17.855	0	0.737	0.544		
	price5	0.686	0.039	17.721	0	0.734	0.538		
Place	place1	1	-	-	-	0.8	0.64	0.564	0.838
	place2	0.821	0.054	15.094	0	0.74	0.548		
	place3	0.82	0.054	15.291	0	0.75	0.562		
	place4	0.772	0.053	14.477	0	0.712	0.507		
Promotion	Promotion1	1	-	-	-	0.854	0.729	0.557	0.862
	Promotion2	0.766	0.045	17.141	0	0.753	0.566		
	Promotion3	0.594	0.042	14.044	0	0.645	0.416		
	Promotion4	0.713	0.043	16.582	0	0.734	0.539		
	Promotion5	0.716	0.043	16.469	0	0.73	0.533		
People	People1	1	-	-	-	0.858	0.736	0.567	0.887
	People2	0.72	0.041	17.493	0	0.745	0.554		
	People3	0.649	0.041	15.919	0	0.696	0.484		
	People4	0.723	0.043	16.964	0	0.729	0.531		
	People5	0.707	0.041	17.3	0	0.739	0.546		
	People6	0.753	0.043	17.445	0	0.743	0.552		
Physical Evidence	pe1	1	-	-	-	0.861	0.741	0.56	0.884
	pe2	0.707	0.042	16.646	0	0.719	0.516		
	pe3	0.776	0.043	17.996	0	0.759	0.577		
	pe4	0.68	0.041	16.493	0	0.714	0.509		
	pe5	0.708	0.044	16.081	0	0.701	0.491		
	pe6	0.727	0.043	16.847	0	0.725	0.525		
Process	Process1	1	-	-	-	0.864	0.747	0.567	0.887
	Process2	0.716	0.041	17.333	0	0.737	0.543		

								CR	AVE
	Process3	0.68	0.041	16.544	0	0.713	0.508		
	Process4	0.699	0.04	17.552	0	0.743	0.552		
	Process5	0.689	0.041	16.805	0	0.721	0.519		
	Process6	0.654	0.038	17.085	0	0.729	0.532		
The Travel Experience of Elderly Tourists	TEET1	1	-	-	-	0.849	0.721	0.59	0.896
	TEET2	0.712	0.04	17.658	0	0.749	0.561		
	TEET3	0.725	0.04	18.061	0	0.761	0.579		
	TEET4	0.761	0.042	18.083	0	0.761	0.58		
	TEET5	0.693	0.041	17.006	0	0.729	0.532		
	TEET6	0.735	0.041	17.841	0	0.754	0.569		
Brand Loyalty of Elderly Tourists	BL1	1	-	-	-	0.823	0.677	0.541	0.824
	BL2	0.735	0.048	15.38	0	0.724	0.524		
	BL3	0.632	0.046	13.888	0	0.664	0.44		
	BL4	0.758	0.049	15.365	0	0.723	0.523		

Note: The bar '-' indicates that the item is a reference item.

This time, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted on 9 factors and 47 analytical items. As can be seen from the table above, the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) values corresponding to all 9 factors are greater than 0.5, and the CR (Composite Reliability) values are all higher than 0.7, meaning that the data from this analysis possess good convergent validity.

Table 3 Model fitting index

Common index	χ^2	*df*	*p*	Chi-square freedom ratio χ^2/df	GFI	RMSEA	CFI	NFI	TLI	AGFI	IFI
Judging standard	-	-	>0.05	<3	>0.9	<0.10	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9
value	1389.582	998	0	1.392	0.882	0.03	0.963	0.88	0.96	0.867	0.963

The provided model fit indicators are utilized to assess the degree of fit between the proposed model and the observed data. The chi-square (χ^2) value is 1389.582 with degrees of freedom (df) being 998, resulting in a chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df) of 1.392, which is below the standard value of 3, indicating a good fit. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is 0.03, significantly below the critical value of 0.10, signifying a good fit between the model and the observed data. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), and Incremental Fit Index (IFI) all exceed 0.9, demonstrating that the model has a generally good fit with the data.

Table 4 Descriptive Analysis

Items	N of samples	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Median
Product	423	1.200	5.000	3.177	0.945	3.400
Price	423	1.220	4.890	3.241	0.770	3.330
Place	423	1.000	5.000	3.320	0.927	3.500
Promotion	423	1.200	5.000	3.233	0.923	3.400
People	423	1.000	4.830	3.234	0.918	3.500
Physical Evidence	423	1.000	4.830	3.225	0.902	3.500
Process	423	1.170	4.830	3.186	0.917	3.500
The Travel Experience of Elderly Tourists	423	1.000	4.830	3.151	0.937	3.330
Brand Loyalty of Elderly Tourists	423	1.250	5.000	3.274	0.837	3.250

The descriptive analysis table summarizes the statistics for different aspects of customer satisfaction, evaluated across a sample of 423 individuals. The measured items include Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Physical Evidence, Process, The Travel Experience of Elderly Tourists, and Brand Loyalty of Elderly Tourists.

For each item, the minimum scores observed range from 1.000 to 1.250, indicating that on the low end, there were some very dissatisfied responses. On the high end, the maximum scores are at or near the top of the scale at 5.000 or slightly below, showing that some individuals were very satisfied.

The mean scores for the items fall between 3.151 and 3.320, suggesting that on average, the responses tend towards the positive side of the midpoint (3.5), though not by a wide margin. This is also reflected in the median values, which are all around 3.330 to 3.500, further suggesting a moderate level of satisfaction.

Standard deviations range from 0.770 to 0.945, which indicates a moderate spread in the responses, with Price being the least varied and Product being the most varied. This suggests that there was more agreement among respondents regarding the Price, while perceptions of Product varied the most.

Table 5 Model fit degree

Index class	Index name	Adaptation standard	Test result	Acceptability or not
Absolute fitness parameter	GFI	>0.8	0.882	Accept
	AGFI	>0.8	0.867	Accept
	RMSEA	<0.08	0.03	Accept
	NFI	>0.8	0.88	Accept
Value-added fitness parameter	IFI	>0.8	0.963	Accept
	CFI	>0.8	0.963	Accept
	RFI	>0.8	0.87	Accept
Reduced fit	CMIN/df	<3	1.389	Accept

| parameters | PGFI | >0.5 | 0.781 | Accept |

The table indicates that the CMIN/DF value for this structural equation model is 1.389, which is less than 3. The RMSEA is 0.03, below the threshold of 0.050. The GFI stands at 0.882, exceeding the minimum of 0.8. Both the CFI and TLI values are greater than 0.9, and the PGFI is 0.781, surpassing the 0.50 criterion. All the fit indices meet the requirements, suggesting that the model has a good match with the measurement scale and a high degree of fit. Therefore, the model is considered to be valid.

Related Analysis

Table 6 Related Analysis

	Product	Price	Place	Promotion	People	Physical Evidence	Process	The Travel Experience of Elderly Tourists	Brand Loyalty of Elderly Tourists
Product	1								
Price	0.431**	1							
Place	0.327**	0.755**	1						
Promotion	0.367**	0.426**	0.353**	1					
People	0.345**	0.432**	0.373**	0.388**	1				
Physical Evidence	0.335**	0.394**	0.342**	0.419**	0.320**	1			
Process	0.350**	0.407**	0.320**	0.367**	0.348**	0.292**	1		
The Travel Experience of Elderly Tourists	0.420**	0.531**	0.459**	0.442**	0.442**	0.439**	0.397**	1	
Brand Loyalty of Elderly Tourists	0.455**	0.577**	0.509**	0.479**	0.461**	0.463**	0.458**	0.534**	1

All the factors including Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Physical Evidence, Process, and The Travel Experience of Elderly Tourists exhibit a significant positive correlation with Brand Loyalty of Elderly Tourists. Specifically, the correlation coefficients range from 0.455 to 0.577, with Price showing the strongest correlation with brand loyalty (0.577) and Product showing the weakest (0.455). All these factors have correlation coefficients greater than 0, indicating that as each factor is increased or improved, the brand loyalty among elderly tourists is likely to enhance. Furthermore, the significant positive correlations between each factor and brand loyalty suggest that they may each affect the loyalty of elderly tourists to some extent, with The Travel Experience of Elderly Tourists showing the most significant correlation (0.534). This implies that improving travel experiences may play a crucial role in strengthening brand loyalty. Overall, these results suggest that to increase brand loyalty among elderly tourists, these service factors need to be considered and enhanced.

Hypothesis testing
Main hypothesis and sub-hypothesis test and results

Table 7 Path analysis

Path	Standard path coefficient	Non-standard path coefficient	S.E.	C.R.	P
Product→The Travel Experience of Elderly Tourists	0.127	0.187	0.076	2.459	0.014
Price→The Travel Experience of Elderly Tourists	0.126	0.174	0.069	2.529	0.011
Place→The Travel Experience of Elderly Tourists	0.22	0.33	0.083	3.98	***
Promotion→The Travel Experience of Elderly Tourists	0.116	0.165	0.079	2.101	0.036
People→The Travel Experience of Elderly Tourists	0.151	0.202	0.07	2.885	0.004
Physical Evidence→The Travel Experience of Elderly Tourists	0.165	0.236	0.075	3.162	0.002
Process→The Travel Experience of Elderly Tourists	0.104	0.157	0.075	2.087	0.037
The Travel Experience of Elderly Tourists→Brand Loyalty	0.121	0.103	0.05	2.064	0.039
Product→Brand Loyalty	0.131	0.163	0.063	2.604	0.009
Price→Brand Loyalty	0.109	0.127	0.057	2.243	0.025
Place→Brand Loyalty	0.253	0.321	0.071	4.541	***
Promotion→Brand Loyalty	0.12	0.144	0.064	2.237	0.025
People→Brand Loyalty	0.117	0.133	0.058	2.302	0.021
Physical Evidence→Brand Loyalty	0.146	0.177	0.062	2.868	0.004
Process→Brand Loyalty	0.145	0.185	0.062	2.978	0.003

The path analysis table presents both standardized and unstandardized path coefficients, standard errors, critical ratios, and p-values for relationships between various factors and The Travel Experience of Elderly Tourists, as well as the impact on Brand Loyalty.

For paths leading to The Travel Experience of Elderly Tourists, coefficients range from 0.104 to 0.22 for standardized estimates, indicating moderate effects. Place shows the strongest effect (0.22) and Process the weakest (0.104). All p-values are significant, with Place reaching a p-value of less than 0.001 (indicated by ***), demonstrating a particularly strong and significant relationship.

Regarding paths leading to Brand Loyalty, standardized path coefficients range from 0.109 to 0.253, with Place again showing the strongest impact on Brand Loyalty (0.253), and Price the weakest (0.109). Similar to The Travel Experience of Elderly Tourists, all paths are statistically significant, with Place and Process showing especially strong significance, indicated by p-values less than 0.001 (***).

The Travel Experience of Elderly Tourists also significantly predicts Brand Loyalty, with a standardized coefficient of 0.121. This indicates that positive travel experiences are associated with increased brand loyalty among elderly tourists.

Overall, the model demonstrates that all considered factors—Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Physical Evidence, and Process—are significantly associated with The Travel Experience of Elderly Tourists and Brand Loyalty, with the environment (Place) having the most substantial influence in both cases. This underscores the importance of a holistic approach to improving elderly tourists' experiences and loyalty, focusing on the place of service delivery as a pivotal element.

The results indicate that the variables of Product, Price, Promotion, People, Physical Evidence, and Process all exhibit partial mediation effects in the relationship between the travel experience and brand loyalty among elderly tourists. The total effects (c) and direct effects (c') for each of these variables are significant at the 0.05 or 0.01 level, suggesting that these variables not only directly influence the brand loyalty of elderly tourists but also indirectly affect it through the mediating variable of travel experience.

For the variable "Place," while the total effect is significant at the 0.05 level, the mediating effect is not significant, indicating that the travel experience does not have a significant mediating role in the relationship between place and brand loyalty among elderly tourists. Statistical significance of the mediating effects was assessed using Bootstrap confidence interval estimation, with all significant mediating effects having 95% confidence intervals that do not include zero, reinforcing the robustness of these findings.

Summary of the results of the study hypotheses

Through the above empirical analysis, this study has verified the interrelationships among the variables of Product,Price,Place,Promotion,People,Physical Evidence,Process,the travel experience of elderly tourists,and brand Loyalty of Elderly Tourists.

Discussion

This study finds that there is a significant relationship between 7Ps and the travel experience of elderly tourists and the brand loyalty of elderly tourists to travel agencies in Thailand, and the travel experience of elderly tourists plays an intermediary role between 7Ps and the brand loyalty of elderly tourists to travel agencies in Thailand.

First of all, 7p has a significant positive impact on the travel experience of elderly tourists.Through path analysis, it is found that 7Ps has a significant positive impact on the travel experience of elderly tourists, which is consistent with the previous research results of Wang Wang, Y.C., Wang, Y.H., & Zhang, Y. (2020). The study found that the place effect is the strongest and the process effect is the weakest.

Second, the travel experience of elderly tourists has a significant positive impact on the brand loyalty of Thai travel agencies.The travel experience of elderly tourists has a significant positive impact on their brand loyalty, which is consistent with the results of Jang S S, Namkung Y(2009). At the same time, the research results show that the travel experience of elderly tourists has a significant predictive effect on their brand loyalty.

Third, 7PS has a significant positive impact on the brand loyalty of Thai elderly tourists to travel agencies.Through the path analysis of the brand loyalty of elderly tourists, it is found that 7p has a significant positive impact on the brand loyalty of elderly tourists. This is consistent with previous findings by Tjan et al. (2015). The results show that in 7Ps marketing mix, location has the greatest influence on brand loyalty, and price has the least influence on brand loyalty.

Fourth, the travel experience of elderly tourists plays an intermediary role between 7PS and the brand loyalty of elderly tourists to travel agencies in Thailand.Through the research, it is not difficult to find that six of the seven variables of 7Ps (Product, Price, Promotion, People, Physical Evidence, and Process) partially mediate the brand loyalty of elderly tourists through travel experience.Through the combination marketing of Product, Price, Promotion, People, Physical Evidence and Process, the travel experience of elderly tourists can be improved, so as to enhance brand loyalty.However, the mediating effect of Place in 7Ps is not significant, indicating that it affects the brand loyalty of elderly tourists, but it is not through the way of travel experience, and there may be other ways for Place to affect the brand loyalty of elderly tourists. This also provides a new idea for the follow-up research on the brand loyalty of elderly tourists.

Recommendations

1. Theoretical Recommendation

This study expands and innovates the theory of customer loyalty, takes travel experience as an intermediary variable, and explores its complete mediating effect with 7PS marketing mix and tourists' brand loyalty, that is, the influence of 7PS on travel agency tourists' brand loyalty is fully realized through tourists' travel experience. This study can not only enrich the content and application of the theory, but also further clarify the importance and mechanism of travel experience, which can provide more effective and efficient strategies for travel agencies to enhance their tourists' brand loyalty.

2. Policy Recommendations

The positive impact of 7PS (Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Physical Evidence, Process) on the travel experience of elderly tourists and their brand loyalty to travel agencies in Thailand, and the interaction between these marketing factors. At the same time, it further reveals the degree of influence of these marketing combinations on the travel experience of elderly tourists and the brand loyalty of travel agencies to Thailand. Therefore, in terms of tourism policy, for the governments of tourist destination countries or regions, It has become particularly important to provide relevant policy support and legal support for the combined marketing of Chinese elderly tourists to Thailand from the aspects of Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Physical Evidence and Process. For travel agencies that organize and receive Chinese elderly tourists, how to improve tourists' travel experience through marketing mix has become a new direction to determine and enhance their brand loyalty.

3. Practical Recommendations

This study provides us with a new perspective, that is, 7Ps can be used to satisfy the travel experience of Chinese elderly tourists to Thailand, so as to enhance their brand loyalty to travel agencies. First of all, Thailand has unique natural landscape, climate type and cultural accumulation, as well as mature tourist routes, which can improve the travel experience of elderly tourists through Product; Secondly, different pricing strategies can be

formulated according to different market positioning, and ticketing standards and ticketing design should be more humanized. Third, the elderly tourists should take traditional advertising as the main promotion channel and utilize online self-media to promote the growth of the number of elderly tourists to Thailand. Fourth, make full use of "Internet +", rely on the distribution channels of travel agencies, and sell tickets on major online platforms, we-media and apps in China; Fifth, improve the service attitude and service skills of tourism employees, pay attention to the maintenance of corporate social image; Sixth, pay attention to environmental hygiene and cleanliness and maintenance of facilities and equipment; Seventh, pay attention to the rationality of the route design and the diversification of the landscape combination to enhance the tourist experience

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