

The Effectiveness of Marketing Strategies Among Pampanga Travel Agencies: An Expanded Mix Assessment from Holy Cross Colleges, Inc.

Kathrine Mei L. Tungol, MBA, CTP**

Holy Cross Colleges, Inc.

*Corresponding Author: kathrinemeitungol@gmail.com, kathrinemeitungol@gmail.com

Abstract— The travel industry continues to experience significant transformation driven by digitalization, changing consumer preferences, and increasing competition among tourism service providers. This study assessed the effectiveness of marketing strategies employed by selected travel agencies in the Province of Pampanga using the Expanded Marketing Mix Framework (8Ps). Specifically, the research examined the extent to which travel agencies implement strategies related to product, price, place, promotion, people, process, physical evidence, and performance, and determined their influence on customer acquisition, customer retention, and business sustainability. A descriptive-quantitative research design was utilized. Data were collected from managers, owners, and customers of selected travel agencies through a structured survey questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential statistical tools, including weighted mean, standard deviation, and correlation analysis, were employed to analyze the data. Findings revealed that promotion, people, and process emerged as the most effective marketing dimensions, highlighting the importance of digital engagement, personalized customer service, and efficient service delivery. Social media marketing, customer referrals, and customized travel packages significantly contributed to customer acquisition and retention. Moreover, agencies that invested in digital platforms and customer relationship management demonstrated stronger business performance. The study concludes that while traditional marketing approaches remain relevant, travel agencies must strengthen their digital marketing capabilities and relationship marketing strategies to remain competitive in the evolving tourism landscape. Strategic recommendations are proposed to assist travel agencies in enhancing their marketing effectiveness and achieving sustainable growth.

Keywords— Travel agencies; marketing strategies; tourism marketing; customer retention; Pampanga.

I. INTRODUCTION

The tourism and travel industry is a significant contributor to economic development, employment generation, and cultural exchange worldwide. In the Philippines, tourism remains one of the key drivers of economic growth, supported by increasing domestic and international travel activities. As the tourism sector continues to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, travel agencies are confronted with heightened competition, rapidly changing customer preferences, and the increasing dominance of digital technologies in travel planning and purchasing.

Travel agencies play a critical role in facilitating travel experiences by connecting tourists with transportation, accommodation, tour packages, and other tourism-related services. Despite the growth of online booking platforms and

self-service travel applications, many travelers continue to rely on travel agencies because of their expertise, personalized assistance, and ability to manage complex travel arrangements. Consequently, travel agencies must adopt innovative and effective marketing strategies to attract customers, maintain loyalty, and sustain profitability.

Marketing strategies serve as essential tools for creating customer value and achieving competitive advantage. The Expanded Marketing Mix Framework, commonly known as the 8Ps of marketing, provides a comprehensive approach for evaluating service-based organizations such as travel agencies. The framework includes Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, Physical Evidence, and Performance. These elements collectively influence customer perceptions, purchasing decisions, and overall business success.

In Pampanga, a province recognized for its culinary heritage, cultural attractions, and strategic location near Clark International Airport, travel agencies operate within a dynamic tourism environment. The increasing accessibility of travel information through digital channels has intensified competition among agencies, requiring them to continuously improve their marketing practices. While previous studies have examined tourism promotion and traveler behavior, limited empirical research has focused specifically on the effectiveness of marketing strategies employed by travel agencies within the province.

This study addresses this gap by assessing the effectiveness of marketing strategies among selected travel agencies in Pampanga using the Expanded Marketing Mix Framework. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for travel agency owners, tourism practitioners, local government units, and researchers seeking to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of tourism-related enterprises.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on the Expanded Marketing Mix Theory proposed by Booms and Bitner (1981), which extends the traditional 4Ps marketing model to include People, Process, and Physical Evidence. The framework is particularly relevant to service-oriented organizations where customer experiences significantly influence purchasing behavior and satisfaction.

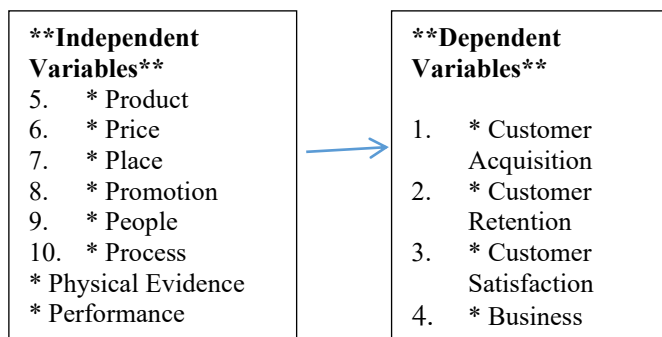
The study is also supported by Relationship Marketing Theory, which was created by Berry in 1983 and highlights the value of building lasting connections with clients as opposed to just concentrating on transactional exchanges. Through customer engagement, personalized communication, and quality service delivery, organizations can improve customer loyalty and retention.

Additionally, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) developed by Davis (1989) provides theoretical support for understanding the adoption of digital marketing platforms and online booking systems. According to the model, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use influence customer acceptance of technology-enabled services.

The integration of these theories provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating how marketing strategies influence customer acquisition, customer retention, and organizational performance among travel agencies in Pampanga.

III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study proposes that the effectiveness of marketing strategies can be explained through the implementation of the Expanded Marketing Mix dimensions:



The framework assumes that effective implementation of the 8Ps contributes positively to customer satisfaction, loyalty, and overall business performance.

IV. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study aims to assess the effectiveness of marketing strategies employed by selected travel agencies in Pampanga.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1 Age;
 - 1.2 Sex;
 - 1.3 Civil Status;
 - 1.4 Occupation; and
 - 1.5 Travel Frequency?
2. What is the extent of implementation of marketing strategies in terms of:
 - 2.1 Product;
 - 2.2 Price;
 - 2.3 Place;
 - 2.4 Promotion;
 - 2.5 People;
 - 2.6 Process;
 - 2.7 Physical Evidence; and

2.8 Performance?

3. How effective are the marketing strategies employed by travel agencies in terms of:

- 3.1 Customer Acquisition;
- 3.2 Customer Retention;
- 3.3 Customer Satisfaction; and
- 3.4 Business Sustainability?

4. Is there a significant relationship between the implementation of marketing strategies and marketing effectiveness?

5. What strategic marketing enhancement plan may be proposed based on the findings of the study?

V. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the implementation of marketing strategies and the effectiveness of travel agency operations in Pampanga.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between the implementation of marketing strategies and the effectiveness of travel agency operations in Pampanga.

VI. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational quantitative research design to assess the effectiveness of marketing strategies implemented by selected travel agencies in Pampanga. The descriptive approach was utilized to determine the extent of implementation of the Expanded Marketing Mix (8Ps), while the correlational component examined the relationship between marketing strategy implementation and business performance indicators.

The design was deemed appropriate because it enabled the researchers to systematically describe existing marketing practices and evaluate their effectiveness in influencing customer acquisition, customer retention, customer satisfaction, and business sustainability.

Research Locale

The study was conducted among selected travel agencies operating within the Province of Pampanga, Philippines. Pampanga was chosen due to its strategic location, growing tourism industry, accessibility through Clark International Airport, and increasing demand for domestic and international travel services.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents consisted of travel agency owners, managers, marketing personnel, and customers from selected travel agencies operating in Pampanga.

Using Slovin's Formula at a 5% margin of error, a total sample of 150 respondents was determined. Stratified random sampling was utilized to ensure adequate representation of both agency personnel and customers.

VII. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The research instrument was adapted from the Expanded Marketing Mix Framework developed by Booms and Bitner (1981) and the SERVQUAL model proposed by Parasuraman

et al. (1988), with modifications informed by tourism marketing studies conducted by Buhalis and Law (2008) and Sigala (2020). The questionnaire was contextualized to assess the effectiveness of marketing strategies employed by travel agencies operating in Pampanga, Philippines. Prior to pilot testing, the instrument underwent content validation by experts in tourism management, marketing, and research methodology.

The questionnaire consisted of three sections:

Part I. Respondent Profile

- Age
- Sex
- Civil Status
- Occupation
- Travel Frequency

Part II. Marketing Strategy Implementation

- Product/Service
- Price
- Place
- Promotion
- People
- Process
- Physical Evidence
- Performance

Part III. Marketing Effectiveness

- Customer Acquisition
- Customer Retention
- Customer Satisfaction
- Business Sustainability

Measurement Scale

Respondents evaluated each statement using a five-point Likert scale to determine the extent of implementation and effectiveness of marketing strategies employed by travel agencies in Pampanga.

TABLE 1. Likert Scale and Verbal Interpretation

Scale	Range	Verbal Interpretation	Descriptive Equivalent
5	4.21–5.00	Very Effective	Marketing strategies are consistently implemented and highly contribute to organizational performance.
4	3.41–4.20	Effective	Marketing strategies are frequently implemented and generally contribute to organizational performance.
3	2.61–3.40	Moderately Effective	Marketing strategies are occasionally implemented and moderately contribute to organizational performance.
2	1.81–2.60	Less Effective	Marketing strategies are seldom implemented and have limited contribution to organizational performance.
1	1.00–1.80	Not Effective	Marketing strategies are rarely implemented and do not significantly contribute to organizational performance.

The weighted mean was used to determine the overall effectiveness of each marketing strategy dimension.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

To establish content validity, the questionnaire was evaluated by a panel of three experts specializing in tourism management, marketing management, and research methodology. Their recommendations regarding clarity, relevance, consistency, and appropriateness of the survey items were incorporated prior to data collection.

A pilot test involving 30 respondents with characteristics similar to the target population was conducted to determine the reliability of the instrument. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

TABLE 2. Reliability Analysis of the Research Instrument

Variable	Cronbach's α	Interpretation
Product	.88	Good Reliability
Price	.84	Good Reliability
Place	.87	Good Reliability
Promotion	.91	Excellent Reliability
People	.90	Excellent Reliability
Process	.89	Good Reliability
Physical Evidence	.86	Good Reliability
Performance	.88	Good Reliability
Overall Instrument	.89	Good Reliability

All dimensions obtained Cronbach's alpha values above the recommended threshold of .70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. The overall reliability coefficient of .89 suggests that the instrument is highly reliable and appropriate for assessing marketing strategy effectiveness among travel agencies in Pampanga.

VIII. STATISTICAL TREATMENT OF DATA

The data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution were used to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents.
2. Weighted Mean was used to determine the extent of implementation and effectiveness of marketing strategies.
3. Standard Deviation was employed to assess the variability of respondents' perceptions.
4. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was utilized to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between marketing strategy implementation and marketing effectiveness.
5. Multiple Regression Analysis was employed to identify the significant predictors of customer acquisition, customer retention, customer satisfaction, and business sustainability.

The level of significance was set at $\alpha = .05$.

IX. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Extent of Marketing Strategy Implementation Among Travel Agencies in Pampanga

Table 3 presents the extent of marketing strategy implementation among selected travel agencies in Pampanga based on the Expanded Marketing Mix Framework. The

overall mean score ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 0.52$) indicates that the respondents perceived the marketing strategies employed by travel agencies as very effective.

Table 3. Extent of Marketing Strategy Implementation Based on the Expanded Marketing Mix Framework

Marketing Strategy	M	SD	Interpretation
Product	4.38	0.56	Effective
Price	4.29	0.61	Effective
Place	4.35	0.58	Effective
Promotion	4.67	0.42	Very Effective
People	4.72	0.39	Very Effective
Process	4.58	0.47	Very Effective
Physical Evidence	4.33	0.60	Effective
Performance	4.44	0.53	Effective
Overall	4.47	0.52	Very Effective

Among the eight dimensions, People obtained the highest mean score ($M = 4.72$, $SD = 0.39$), suggesting that customer-oriented service, employee competence, and personalized travel assistance play a critical role in enhancing customer experiences and organizational performance. This finding supports Berry's (1983) Relationship Marketing Theory, which emphasizes the importance of developing long-term customer relationships through superior service quality and customer engagement.

Similarly, Promotion ($M = 4.67$, $SD = 0.42$) and Process ($M = 4.58$, $SD = 0.47$) were rated very effective. These findings indicate that travel agencies actively utilize digital marketing platforms, social media advertising, promotional campaigns, and streamlined service processes to attract and retain customers. The results are consistent with Buhalis and Law (2008), who emphasized the importance of information technology and digital marketing in enhancing tourism competitiveness.

The dimensions of Product ($M = 4.38$), Price ($M = 4.29$), Place ($M = 4.35$), Physical Evidence ($M = 4.33$), and Performance ($M = 4.44$) were likewise rated effective, indicating that travel agencies continuously strive to provide competitive travel packages, accessible service channels, attractive business environments, and quality service outcomes.

Overall, the findings suggest that effective implementation of the Expanded Marketing Mix significantly contributes to the competitiveness and sustainability of travel agencies operating in Pampanga.

Effectiveness of Marketing Strategies in Terms of Business Outcomes

TABLE 4. Effectiveness of Marketing Strategies in Terms of Business Outcomes

Outcome Variable	M	Interpretation
Customer Acquisition	4.61	Very Effective
Customer Retention	4.58	Very Effective
Customer Satisfaction	4.74	Very Effective
Business Sustainability	4.49	Very Effective
Overall	4.61	Very Effective

The findings indicate that the marketing strategies employed by travel agencies significantly contribute to customer satisfaction and acquisition. Customer satisfaction obtained the highest rating ($M = 4.74$), suggesting that effective marketing communication and service delivery positively influence customer experiences.

These findings support Relationship Marketing Theory, which posits that customer satisfaction serves as a precursor to customer loyalty, repeat patronage, and long-term organizational success.

Relationship Between Marketing Strategy Implementation and Marketing Effectiveness

TABLE 5. Correlation Between Marketing Strategy Implementation and Marketing Effectiveness

Variable	r	p	Interpretation
Product	.631	< .001	Significant
Price	.582	< .001	Significant
Place	.611	< .001	Significant
Promotion	.773	< .001	Significant
People	.814	< .001	Significant
Process	.741	< .001	Significant
Physical Evidence	.562	< .001	Significant
Performance	.692	< .001	Significant

The results revealed significant positive relationships between all dimensions of the Expanded Marketing Mix and marketing effectiveness. The strongest relationship was observed for People ($r = .814$, $p < .001$), indicating that customer service quality substantially influences organizational performance.

Likewise, Promotion ($r = .773$, $p < .001$) and Process ($r = .741$, $p < .001$) demonstrated strong positive relationships with marketing effectiveness, emphasizing the importance of digital engagement, promotional activities, and efficient service delivery in enhancing customer satisfaction and business sustainability.

X. CONCLUSION

This study assessed the effectiveness of marketing strategies employed by selected travel agencies in Pampanga using the Expanded Marketing Mix Framework. The findings revealed that travel agencies effectively implement various marketing strategies, with an overall mean indicating a very effective level of implementation. Among the eight dimensions examined, People, Promotion, and Process emerged as the most influential marketing strategy components, highlighting the importance of personalized customer service, digital marketing initiatives, and efficient service delivery in enhancing organizational performance.

The study further revealed that the marketing strategies implemented by travel agencies significantly contribute to customer acquisition, customer retention, customer satisfaction, and business sustainability. Customer satisfaction obtained the highest effectiveness rating, suggesting that the ability of travel agencies to meet customer expectations

through quality service and effective communication remains a critical determinant of business success.

Moreover, the results of the correlation analysis established significant positive relationships between all dimensions of the Expanded Marketing Mix and marketing effectiveness. The strongest relationships were observed in the dimensions of People, Promotion, and Process, indicating that human interaction, strategic promotional efforts, and streamlined operational procedures play a vital role in improving customer experiences and organizational outcomes.

Overall, the findings support the propositions of Marketing Mix Theory, Relationship Marketing Theory, and the Technology Acceptance Model, affirming that effective marketing strategies contribute substantially to the competitiveness, sustainability, and long-term success of travel agencies. As the tourism industry continues to evolve in the digital era, travel agencies must continuously innovate their marketing approaches, strengthen customer relationships, and leverage technology-driven solutions to maintain their competitive advantage and achieve sustainable growth.

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