



The Impact of Marketing Mix on Generation Z's Mobile Phone Case Purchasing Decisions in Chiang Mai, Thailand

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Abstract

Background and Aim: The proliferation of smartphones, particularly among Generation Z, has propelled the mobile phone case market into a period of remarkable growth. This research investigates the factors influencing the purchasing decisions of Generation Z students in Chiang Mai province, Thailand, regarding mobile phone cases.

Materials and Methods: A quantitative research methodology was employed, utilizing a questionnaire administered to 385 Bachelor's degree students across various universities in Chiang Mai province. The data analysis encompassed descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis to rigorously test hypotheses related to the impact of the marketing mix (product, price, place, and promotion) on purchasing decisions.

Results: The research unequivocally establishes that all elements of the marketing mix significantly influence purchasing decisions among Generation Z students. Price is the most salient factor, followed by place, product, and promotion. Regression analysis confirms this influence ($p < 0.05$) with price ($b = 0.251$) exerting the strongest effect. The model accounts for 40.5% of the variance in purchasing decisions ($R^2 = 0.405$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.398$, $F = 64.561$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting other factors also contribute to consumer behavior. These findings underscore the need for a comprehensive marketing strategy targeting Generation Z consumers, optimizing each element of the marketing mix.

Conclusion: This study confirms the pivotal role of the marketing mix in shaping consumer behavior within the mobile phone case market. The results highlight the need for businesses to adopt a holistic marketing strategy that considers the relative importance of each element, with a particular emphasis on price and distribution channels. These insights can inform targeted marketing efforts and product development initiatives to effectively cater to the preferences of Generation Z consumers.

Keywords: Generation Z, Mobile Phone Case; Purchasing Decision; Marketing Mix; Consumer Behavior

Introduction

The National Statistical Office (NSO) of Thailand has documented a significant rise in household utilization of computers and smartphones, a trend accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent shift towards remote work and online education (Tunpornchai et al., 2024). This has positioned these devices as essential tools for communication, education, and professional activities, with smartphones in particular achieving near-universal adoption (Kamkankaew et al., 2022). The multifaceted functionality of smartphones, encompassing navigation, information access, and financial transactions, has further entrenched their importance in contemporary Thai society (Tangmunkongvorakul et al., 2019).

This pervasive reliance on smartphones has fueled a concomitant surge in demand for phone cases, and accessories designed to safeguard and enhance these increasingly valuable devices (Melumad & Pham, 2020). The Thai market for phone cases has become intensely competitive, characterized by brands vying for consumer attention through a diverse array of styles, designs, and price points (Chongchitpaisan et al., 2021). Phone cases have evolved beyond their utilitarian purpose, transforming into fashion statements that reflect the individuality and personal identity of their users (Sarmadi et al., 2023).

Generation Z teenagers, digital natives who have grown up immersed in technology, demonstrate distinctive consumer behaviors (Farrell & Phungsoonthorn, 2020). They exhibit a marked preference for online platforms for research, comparison, and ultimately, the purchase of products. This demographic values uniqueness and seeks out distinctive, yet affordable, fashion items (Euajarusphan, 2021). Their proclivity for online shopping and preference for individualistic products present both challenges and opportunities for businesses operating within this sector (Parvin, 2021).

The mobile phone case market in Chiang Mai province, Thailand, is experiencing a notable transformation, with Generation Z emerging as a pivotal consumer segment (Thanhapachcharakul, 2023). Generation Z consumers are increasingly influencing market trends thanks to their discerning purchasing habits and digital nativism. Recent empirical data from Thailand underscores the significant influence of brand trust and perceived brand quality on Generation Z's purchasing decisions (Boonmee & Boonmee, 2022). This phenomenon has prompted a growing interest in understanding the intricate factors driving Generation Z's preferences for mobile phone cases in Chiang Mai. The present research aims to address this gap by examining the interplay between brand trust, perceived brand quality, and Generation Z's purchasing behavior within the specific context of mobile phone cases in Chiang Mai province. By elucidating these dynamics, this study seeks to provide actionable insights for marketers and manufacturers seeking to effectively target and engage this influential consumer demographic.

This research seeks to investigate the factors that influence the purchase decisions of Generation Z students in Chiang Mai province about mobile phone cases. Understanding the motivations and preferences of this demographic is pivotal for businesses aiming to effectively tailor their strategies, ensuring their offerings align with the evolving needs and lifestyles of this influential consumer segment. Ultimately, this study aims to generate actionable insights that can inform future marketing and product development initiatives within the dynamic mobile phone case market.

Objectives

This research aims to investigate the marketing mix factors influencing the mobile phone case purchasing decisions of Generation Z students in Chiang Mai Province.

Literature review

This section presents purchasing decisions and the marketing mix to establish the fundamental concepts underpinning this research.

Purchasing decisions

Purchasing decisions are a complex interplay of various factors that shape consumer behavior (Kidane & Sharma, 2016). These choices, ranging from everyday necessities like groceries to significant investments such as real estate, are not made in isolation but are influenced by a multitude of interconnected elements. Fundamental to these decisions are the needs of the consumer (Ridwan, 2022). These can be physiological, such as food and shelter, or psychological, like the need for belonging or self-esteem. Needs often form the foundation upon which other factors exert their influence, as consumers seek to fulfill these requirements through their purchases (Laios & Moschuris, 2001).

However, consumer choices extend beyond mere needs (Safitri, 2018). Wants, which are desires for goods and services not essential for survival, play a significant role (Ali & Anwar, 2021). These can be influenced by marketing efforts, societal trends, or personal aspirations. Balancing needs and wants within the constraints of a budget is a crucial aspect of consumer decision-making, often requiring trade-offs and prioritization. Personal preferences also contribute significantly to purchasing behavior (Yusuf & Matiin, 2022). Consumers may exhibit brand loyalty, favor specific styles or features, or prioritize ethical considerations. These preferences are shaped by individual experiences, cultural backgrounds, and personal values (Praditsuwan & Karnreungsiri, 2019).

In conclusion, purchasing decisions are far from simple transactions. They are the culmination of a complex decision-making process, where needs, wants, budgetary constraints, and personal preferences intersect. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for businesses seeking to cater to consumer demands and for individuals striving to make informed and fulfilling choices in the marketplace.

Marketing Mix

The 4Ps of marketing, also known as the marketing mix, are a cornerstone of strategic marketing management (Kotler et al., 2018). It provides a comprehensive framework that delineates the key elements involved in the successful introduction and promotion of a product or service to its intended audience (Thabit & Raewf, 2018). These four interconnected components—Product, Price, Place, and Promotion—serve as controllable variables that organizations can manipulate to optimize their marketing efforts.

The product encompasses the totality of the offering, encompassing its tangible and intangible attributes (Kotler et al., 2018). It includes the product's design, features, quality, packaging, branding, and associated services (Darmawan & Grenier, 2021). A profound understanding of the target market's needs

and preferences is paramount to crafting a product that resonates with and fulfills consumer demands (Lahtinen, Dietrich & Rundle-Thiele, 2020).

Price denotes the monetary value that customers exchange for the product or service (Kotler et al., 2018). Pricing strategies can vary considerably, influenced by factors such as production costs, competitive landscape, perceived value, and desired profitability (Hanaysha, Al-Shaikh & Alzoubi, 2021). Effective pricing necessitates a meticulous analysis of both internal and external factors to determine a price point that aligns with the company's objectives and consumer expectations (Mahmoud, 2018).

Place pertains to the distribution channels and physical or digital locations through which the product or service is made accessible to consumers (Kotler et al., 2018). It encompasses decisions regarding retail partnerships, online platforms, logistics networks, and inventory management (Al Badi, 2018). The selection of appropriate distribution channels is crucial for ensuring that the product reaches the right audience at the right time.

Promotion encompasses the entirety of marketing communications initiatives aimed at raising awareness, fostering interest, and ultimately stimulating demand for the product or service (Kotler et al., 2018). Promotional strategies may include advertising campaigns, public relations efforts, sales promotions, personal selling, and digital marketing tactics (Wu & Li, 2018). A well-orchestrated promotional mix is essential for effectively conveying the product's value proposition to the target market.

It is important to recognize that the 4Ps are not isolated elements but rather interconnected components of a holistic marketing strategy (Anisa & Oktafia, 2021). For instance, a premium product may warrant a higher price point, while a product with a lower price point may necessitate a more aggressive promotional approach (Helmold, 2022). Additionally, the chosen distribution channels will directly impact the efficacy of specific promotional activities (Nonthapot & Thomya, 2020).

In conclusion, the 4Ps of marketing continue to provide a robust and versatile framework for marketers navigating the dynamic and ever-evolving marketplace. By comprehending and effectively leveraging this foundational concept, businesses can develop and execute marketing strategies that resonate with consumers, cultivate brand loyalty, and drive sustainable growth in an increasingly competitive environment.

Conceptual Framework

A synthesis of prior research by Akaram et al. (2019), Asdi & Putra (2020), Jiacheng, Traiwannakij & Srisuk (2020), Wongsawat & Deebhijarn (2020), Kamkankaew et al. (2004), and Pereira, Dewi & da Conceicao Soares (2024) serves as the foundation for the research framework presented in this study.

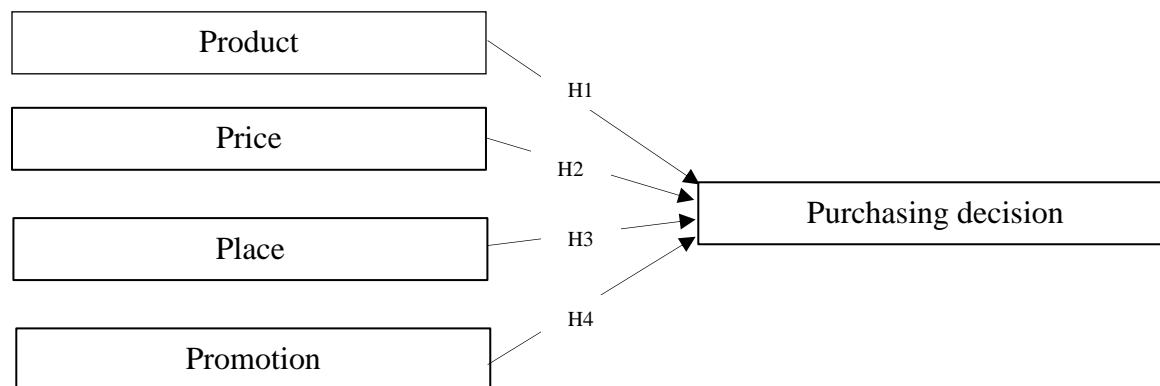


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

Methodology

This research investigates the factors influencing mobile phone case purchasing decisions among students in Chiang Mai Province. Utilizing a quantitative approach, the subsequent section will elucidate the specific methodologies employed in this study.

Population and sample size



The target population for this research consisted of Bachelor's degree students enrolled in various higher education institutions across Chiang Mai province, including Chiang Mai University, Maejo University, North-Chiang Mai University, Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna, Chiang Mai Rajabhat University, Payap University, and Far Eastern University. Due to the unavailability of precise data regarding the total number of students in Chiang Mai, the Cochran formula (Uakarn, Chaokromthong & Sintao, 2021) was employed to determine a statistically appropriate sample size. With a 95% confidence level and a margin of error not exceeding 5%, the calculated sample size was 384.16, which was subsequently rounded up to 385 participants for this study.

Data collection

Data collection for this research was conducted via questionnaires administered to students in Chiang Mai province between September 2023 and January 2024. Following this initial phase, the questionnaires underwent a rigorous screening process to ensure completeness. Quantitative data derived from fully completed questionnaires were subsequently analyzed statistically to draw meaningful conclusions.

Research instrument

This quantitative study investigated the factors influencing mobile phone case purchasing decisions among students in Chiang Mai Province. A questionnaire comprising 35 items was employed as the data collection instrument. Reliability analysis, utilizing Cronbach's alpha coefficient, indicated a high degree of internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.837$) for the questionnaire.

Data analysis

Following the acquisition of comprehensive data, descriptive statistics, which are mean, standard deviation, kurtosis, and skewness; were computed to assess adherence to a normal distribution. Correlations between variables were examined via correlation coefficient analysis. Subsequently, multiple regression analysis was employed to rigorously test the proposed hypotheses.

Results

This section details the research findings, emphasizing the results of the hypothesis testing procedures.

Descriptive statistics of the variables

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the marketing mix (4Ps) variables and purchasing decisions. The mean values for product (MKD), price (MLI), place (MKL), promotion (MKO), and purchasing decision (Y_PUD) range from 4.119 to 4.321, indicating respondents generally perceive these elements as effective. Standard deviations vary between 0.829 and 0.886, signifying moderate dispersion around the means. Skewness and kurtosis values for all variables remain within acceptable ranges, suggesting approximate normality in the data distribution. These findings offer preliminary insights into consumer perceptions and potential relationships within the marketing mix framework, which warrant further investigation through inferential analysis.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of the variables

Variables	Mean	S.D.	SK	KU	Meaning of Mean
Product (MKD)	4.321	0.863	0.882	0.779	high level
Price (MLI)	4.275	0.830	0.741	0.615	high level
Place (MKL)	4.158	0.831	0.523	0.788	high level
Promotion (MKO)	4.230	0.886	0.731	0.319	high level
Purchasing decision (Y_PUD)	4.119	0.829	0.639	0.270	high level

Correlation analysis



Table 2 displays the results of the correlation analysis, revealing significant positive associations between each marketing mix element (product, price, place, and promotion) and the purchasing decision ($p < 0.01$). Notably, the strongest correlations were observed between product and place ($r = 0.785$), and product and price ($r = 0.782$). These findings underscore the substantial influence of the marketing mix, both collectively and individually, on consumer purchasing behavior.

Table 2 The result of the Correlation analysis

	Y_PUD	MKD	MKI	MKL	MKO
Y_PUD	1.000				
MKD	0.779**	1.000			
MKI	0.731**	0.782**	1.000		
MKL	0.709**	0.785**	0.733**	1.000	
MKO	0.736**	0.747**	0.754**	0.746**	1.000

Note: ** means a statistical significance level of 0.01

Table 3 appears to show the results of a multicollinearity test, which is used to assess whether predictor variables in a regression model are highly correlated with each other. The VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) and Tolerance values are commonly used metrics to diagnose multicollinearity. VIF values above 5 or 10 and Tolerance values below 0.2 or 0.1 are often considered indicative of multicollinearity. In this case, all VIF values are below 1 and all Tolerance values are above 1, suggesting no multicollinearity issues among the predictor variables.

Table 3 The result of multicollinearity testing

Variables	VIF values	Tolerance values	Meaning
MKD	0.690	1.449	Not Multicollinearity
MKI	0.610	1.640	Not Multicollinearity
MKL	0.612	1.633	Not Multicollinearity
MKO	0.730	1.369	Not Multicollinearity

Hypothesis Testing

A regression analysis is shown in Table 4 that looks at how different parts of the marketing mix—product (MKD), price (MKI), place (MKL), and promotion (MKO)—affect people's decisions to buy (Y_PUD). A standard multiple regression model was employed to quantify the effects of these variables.

The dependent variable, Y_PUD, represents purchasing decisions. According to their respective p-values (all $p < 0.05$), each independent marketing mix variable significantly affects Y_PUD. The coefficients (b) for MKD, MKI, MKL, and MKO are 0.196, 0.251, 0.204, and 0.150, respectively. Price (MKI), which has the highest coefficient of 0.251, has the biggest impact on consumers' purchasing decisions, followed by place (MKL), product (MKD), and promotion (MKO).

The standard errors (SE) associated with these coefficients are relatively low (ranging from 0.043 to 0.051), indicating high precision in the estimates. The t-values, all significant at the 0.05 level, further confirm the model's robustness. The standardized coefficients (β) reveal that each element of the marketing mix independently accounts for 16% to 25% of the variance in purchasing decisions, with price being the most influential.

An R^2 of 0.405 indicates that the four marketing mix components collectively explain about 40.5% of the variance in purchasing decisions, supporting the model's goodness of fit. The adjusted R^2 of 0.398, slightly lower, accounts for the number of predictors, suggesting the model generalizes well. The highly significant F-statistic of 64.561 (sig. of $F = 0.000$) underscores the overall statistical significance of the

regression model. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.943 indicates no substantial autocorrelation in the residuals, confirming the observations' independence.

This analysis demonstrates the crucial role of the marketing mix in shaping consumer purchasing decisions, with each component contributing significantly to the model's predictive power. The study emphasizes the importance of considering multiple facets of marketing strategy to influence consumer behavior effectively.

Table 4 The result of entering method regression analysis

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable: Y_PUD				
	b	SE	β	t	p-value
Constant (a)	0.803	0.210		3.816	0.000*
MKD	0.196	0.046	0.204	4.272	0.000*
MKI	0.251	0.051	0.251	4.958	0.000*
MKL	0.204	0.050	0.205	4.045	0.000*
MKO	0.150	0.043	0.160	3.449	0.001*

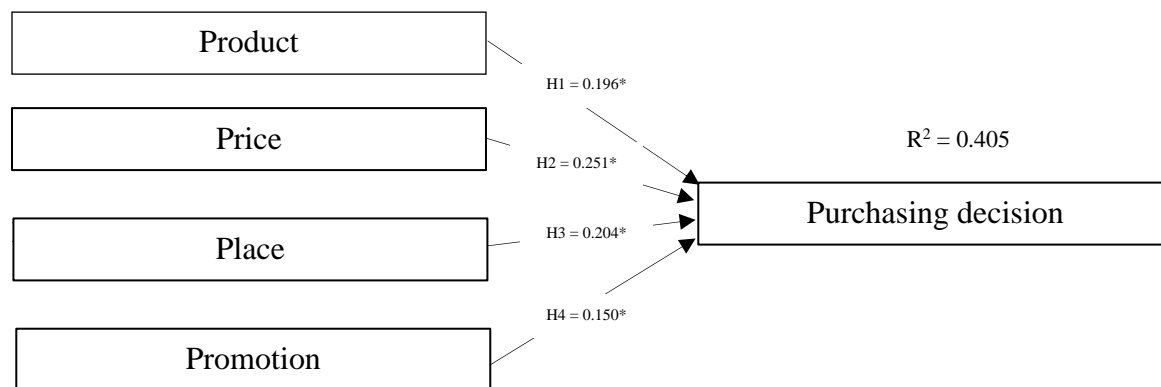
$R = 0.636$, $R^2 = 0.405$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.398$, $R^2_{\text{change}} = 0.405$
 $F = 64.561$, Sig. of $F = 0.000$, Durbin-Watson = 1.943

Note: * means a statistical significance level of 0.05

The regression equation derived from the results in Table 4 is:

$$Y_PUD = 0.803 + 0.196(MKD) + 0.251(MKI) + 0.204(MKL) + 0.150(MKO) + e$$

This equation allows for the prediction of purchasing decisions (Y_PUD) based on the values of the marketing mix variables. The coefficients for each variable (MKD, MKI, MKL, MKO) indicate the magnitude and direction of their influence on purchasing decisions, holding the other variables constant.



Note: * means a statistical significance level of 0.05

Figure 2 Hypothesis Testing

Discussion

This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by empirically validating the significance of the marketing mix in the specific context of mobile phone case purchasing decisions among Generation Z students in Chiang Mai Province. The study's findings not only confirm the generalizability



of established marketing principles but also offer nuanced insights into the relative importance of each marketing mix element within this particular demographic and product category. Businesses operating in this market can benefit from the identification of price as the most important factor, then place, product, and promotion. Moreover, the study's regression model, explaining 40.5% of the variance in purchasing decisions, underscores the complexity of consumer behavior and the need for a comprehensive understanding of the factors that drive it. This research thus extends the existing literature by offering a context-specific analysis and a refined understanding of the marketing mix's impact on consumer choices.

Building on an extensive synthesis of prior research (Akaram et al., 2019; Asdi & Putra, 2020; Jiacheng, Traiwannakij & Srisuk, 2020; Wongsawat & Deebhijarn, 2020; Kamkankaew et al., 2004; Pereira, Dewi & da Conceicao Soares, 2024), this study investigates the impact of the marketing mix on consumer purchasing decisions. Utilizing a robust standard multiple regression model, we find that all four marketing mix elements – product, price, place, and promotion – are significant determinants of purchasing decisions.

Regression analysis reveals that price (MKI) exerts the strongest influence, followed by place (MKL), product (MKD), and promotion (MKO). These results align with the coefficients, indicating that consumers prioritize cost considerations, supporting the economic theory of rational consumer behavior where price is a primary factor (Kotler et al., 2018).

The relative importance of place underscores the role of accessibility and convenience in the purchasing process. This finding resonates with Thabit & Raewf's (2018) assertion that ease of acquisition significantly influences consumer choice, emphasizing the strategic importance of distribution channels. While less influential than price and place, product and promotion significantly affect decisions. The impact of product attributes aligns with Darmawan & Grenier (2021), who highlighted the importance of aligning product design with consumer needs. Similarly, the influence of promotion reflects Wu & Li's (2018) findings on strategic communication's effectiveness in shaping perceptions and behaviors.

The regression model, explaining 40.5% of the variance in purchasing decisions, confirms the complexity of consumer decision-making noted by Kidane & Sharma (2016). The Durbin-Watson statistic supports the independence of residuals, enhancing the model's predictive validity. Overall, our findings emphasize the need for a balanced marketing strategy. The interconnectedness of the 4Ps (Anisa & Oktafia, 2021) necessitates a holistic approach. For instance, premium pricing should be complemented by appropriate promotion and distribution to enhance perception and accessibility. Beyond academia, this study offers practical insights. Understanding the weighted influence of each element allows marketers to tailor strategies to consumer needs and enhance effectiveness. Additionally, our insights can inform the development of more nuanced models incorporating consumer demographics, psychographics, and external factors, further elucidating purchasing behavior.

In conclusion, this research substantiates the critical role of the marketing mix and underscores the necessity for businesses to adopt comprehensive, responsive strategies aligned with consumer preferences and market dynamics.

Conclusion

This study reaffirms the indispensable role of the marketing mix in shaping consumer purchasing decisions. Through rigorous regression analysis, we have established the significant influence of product, price, place, and promotion on consumer behavior, with price emerging as the most potent determinant. Our findings align with existing literature, reinforcing the economic theory of rational consumer behavior and underscoring the strategic importance of distribution channels and product design. The model's explanatory power, accounting for 40.5% of the variance in purchasing decisions, elucidates the complexity of consumer choice. While acknowledging the model's limitations, its predictive validity is bolstered by the absence of autocorrelation in residuals. These results offer actionable insights for marketers, emphasizing the need for a balanced marketing strategy that harmonizes all elements of the mix. The interconnectedness of the 4Ps necessitates a holistic approach, where premium pricing is complemented by targeted promotion and strategic distribution. Furthermore, our findings lay the groundwork for future research, including the incorporation of consumer demographics, psychographics, and external factors into more nuanced models.



Recommendation

Recommendations for Businesses

1. The study's results indicate that price is the most influential factor in purchasing decisions. Businesses should carefully consider their pricing strategies, taking into account factors such as perceived value, competitor pricing, and consumer price sensitivity. Dynamic pricing and promotional pricing could be explored to optimize revenue and attract price-conscious consumers.
2. Given the significance of place, businesses need to ensure their products or services are readily available through convenient channels. This may involve expanding online presence, establishing partnerships with retailers, or investing in direct-to-consumer delivery models.
3. While less influential than price and place, product attributes remain significant. Businesses should invest in understanding their target audience's needs and preferences, and develop products that align with these needs. Incorporating innovation and unique features can help differentiate products in a competitive market.
4. Promotional activities, while having the least direct impact compared to other elements, still play a crucial role in influencing consumer decisions. Businesses should develop targeted and engaging promotional campaigns that effectively communicate the value proposition of their products or services. Utilizing a mix of digital and traditional marketing channels can help reach a wider audience.
5. The study emphasizes the interconnectedness of the 4Ps of marketing. Businesses should avoid focusing on one element in isolation and instead adopt a comprehensive marketing strategy that leverages the synergies between product, price, place, and promotion. This involves aligning all marketing efforts to create a consistent and compelling brand message.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. Future research should explore the impact of the marketing mix on different consumer segments, considering factors such as demographics, psychographics, and cultural background. Understanding how these variables moderate the effects of the marketing mix can help businesses tailor their strategies to specific target audiences.
2. The current study focused on the internal factors of the marketing mix. Future research could expand this by investigating the influence of external factors, such as economic conditions, social trends, technological advancements, and competitive landscape, on consumer purchasing decisions.
3. The rise of digital marketing channels necessitates further research into their specific impact on consumer behavior. Studies could examine the effectiveness of various digital marketing tactics, such as social media marketing, search engine optimization, and content marketing, in influencing purchasing decisions.
4. Future research could aim to develop more sophisticated models that incorporate a wider range of variables, including those related to consumer psychology, social influence, and contextual factors. Such models could provide a more nuanced understanding of consumer decision-making processes and inform the development of more effective marketing strategies.

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