

Model of Customer Loyalty for Homestay Entrepreneurs in Ratchaburi Province

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Abstract

This study aims to develop and validate a structural model of customer loyalty for homestay entrepreneurs in Ratchaburi Province, Thailand, by examining the relationships among the service marketing mix, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. A quantitative research approach was employed, and data were collected from 360 homestay entrepreneurs using a structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modeling (SEM).

The results reveal that the service marketing mix has a significant direct effect on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. In addition, customer satisfaction has a significant direct effect on customer loyalty. The findings also indicate that customer satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between the service marketing mix and customer loyalty. The overall model demonstrates an excellent fit with the empirical data, confirming the validity of the proposed structural relationships.

The study highlights the importance of effectively managing service marketing mix elements, particularly people, process, and physical evidence, in enhancing customer satisfaction and fostering long-term customer loyalty in the homestay tourism context. The findings provide practical insights for homestay entrepreneurs and contribute to the literature on service marketing and tourism management in provincial destinations in Thailand.

Keywords: service marketing mix, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, homestay tourism, Ratchaburi Province

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Significance of the Problem

Tourism is a significant driver of economic development in Thailand, contributing to income generation, employment, and regional growth. In parallel with the expansion of tourism, homestay accommodation has emerged as an important form of community-based tourism, offering authentic experiences while supporting local entrepreneurs and sustainable development. Homestays allow tourists to engage closely with local lifestyles, culture, and community values, thereby enhancing experiential value beyond conventional accommodation.

Ratchaburi Province has become an emerging destination for homestay tourism due to its rich cultural heritage, natural attractions, and convenient accessibility from Bangkok. Homestay entrepreneurs in the province play a crucial role in delivering personalized services that reflect local identity and hospitality. However, increasing competition and rising customer expectations pose challenges for sustaining business performance, particularly in terms of retaining loyal customers.

Customer loyalty is a key determinant of long-term success in service-based businesses. Previous studies suggest that loyalty is strongly influenced by the service marketing mix and customer satisfaction. The service marketing mix, conceptualized through the 7Ps framework, enables service providers to design value-driven service experiences, while customer satisfaction reflects tourists' evaluations of service quality, perceived value, trust, and brand image. Satisfied customers are more likely to engage in repeat visits and provide positive recommendations.

Despite the growing importance of homestay tourism in Ratchaburi Province, empirical research that integrates the service marketing mix, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty within a single structural model remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to examine the direct and indirect effects of the service marketing mix on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction among homestay entrepreneurs in Ratchaburi Province, Thailand, using a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach. The findings are expected to provide practical insights for enhancing service strategies and strengthening customer loyalty in provincial homestay tourism.

1.2 Research Objective

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To examine the effect of the service marketing mix on customer satisfaction among homestay entrepreneurs in Ratchaburi Province.
2. To analyze the direct effect of the service marketing mix on customer loyalty among homestay entrepreneurs in Ratchaburi Province.
3. To investigate the effect of customer satisfaction on customer loyalty in the context of homestay tourism in Ratchaburi Province.
4. To examine the indirect effect of the service marketing mix on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction among homestay entrepreneurs in Ratchaburi Province.

1.3 Research Hypotheses

Based on the conceptual framework and relevant literature, the research hypotheses are formulated as follows:

H1: The service marketing mix has a direct effect on customer satisfaction among homestay entrepreneurs in Ratchaburi Province.

H2: The service marketing mix has a direct effect on customer loyalty among homestay entrepreneurs in Ratchaburi Province.

H3: Customer satisfaction has a direct effect on customer loyalty among homestay entrepreneurs in Ratchaburi Province.

H4: The service marketing mix has an indirect effect on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction among homestay entrepreneurs in Ratchaburi Province.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Service Marketing Mix

The service marketing mix is a fundamental concept in service management and plays a crucial role in shaping customer perceptions, satisfaction, and loyalty, particularly in service-oriented businesses such as homestay tourism. To examine the service marketing mix in this study, the conceptual foundation is drawn from prior studies by You (2018), Gamlath (2023), and Zeithaml et al. (2018), which emphasize the importance of service standards and customer-oriented service delivery in enhancing customer experiences. These studies provide a comprehensive understanding of how service attributes influence customer expectations and behavioral responses.

In the context of homestay tourism, service delivery is highly experiential and interaction-based, making relationship-oriented marketing particularly important. Schiffman and Kanuk (2007) highlighted customer relationship management (CRM) as a critical service factor, emphasizing continuous marketing activities aimed at building long-term, mutually beneficial relationships between service providers and customers. Effective CRM practices encourage positive service encounters, strengthen emotional bonds, and increase the likelihood of customer loyalty and repeat patronage, which are essential for the sustainability of homestay businesses.

Based on the frameworks proposed by You (2018) and Gamlath (2023), the service marketing mix is operationalized through the 7Ps framework, consisting of product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence. These elements collectively represent strategic tools that service providers can employ to design, communicate, and deliver value to customers. In homestay settings, the service product reflects authentic local experiences, pricing must be perceived as fair and reasonable, and place relates to accessibility and environmental attractiveness. Promotion communicates value propositions, while people, process, and physical evidence are particularly critical due to the high level of personal interaction and tangible cues associated with homestay services.

For homestay entrepreneurs in Ratchaburi Province, the effective management of the service marketing mix is essential for differentiating their offerings in a competitive tourism market. By aligning service marketing strategies with customer expectations and local identity, homestay entrepreneurs can enhance service quality perceptions, improve customer satisfaction, and ultimately foster long-term customer loyalty.

2.2 Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is widely recognized as a crucial factor influencing business sustainability, particularly in service-oriented industries such as homestay tourism. In the context of homestay entrepreneurs, customer satisfaction reflects tourists' overall evaluations of service experiences, which directly affect their behavioral intentions. Previous studies have consistently emphasized that satisfied guests are more likely to revisit, recommend the homestay to others, and develop long-term loyalty. To support this perspective, the literature draws on empirical studies by Triandewo and Dewantoro (2021), Xing et al. (2022), and Wang et al. (2022), which examined the role of customer satisfaction in tourism and homestay-related services.

Customer satisfaction is particularly important for homestay entrepreneurs in Ratchaburi Province, where service encounters are highly personalized and closely linked to host-guest interactions. When guests perceive high service quality, appropriate value, and positive emotional experiences, their satisfaction increases, leading to stronger loyalty intentions. Satisfied customers are more likely to engage in repeat visits and provide positive word-of-mouth recommendations, which are essential for maintaining a loyal customer base and enhancing competitiveness in local tourism markets (Qiu et al., 2022).

Furthermore, increased customer retention resulting from high satisfaction levels contributes to improved profitability for homestay entrepreneurs. Loyal customers help reduce marketing and customer acquisition costs while generating stable revenue through repeat purchases (Nasir, 2017). In addition, satisfied guests tend to spend more on supplementary services and experiences during their stay, further enhancing business performance (Niu et al., 2023). The reviewed studies provide empirical evidence supporting the positive relationship between customer satisfaction, customer retention, and business outcomes in homestay and tourism-related contexts. Previous studies in the Thai tourism context indicate that tourists' satisfaction and perceived service experiences significantly influence their behavioral intentions, including revisit and recommendation behaviors (Phuthong et al., 2024)

Overall, the literature underscores the importance of prioritizing customer satisfaction as a strategic objective for homestay entrepreneurs. By consistently delivering satisfying service experiences, homestay businesses can strengthen customer loyalty, encourage positive recommendations, and achieve long-term sustainability, particularly within province-based tourism destinations such as Ratchaburi.

2.3 Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty is a critical factor for the sustainability and growth of homestay businesses, as it directly influences profitability, market stability, and long-term competitiveness. In the context of homestay tourism, customer loyalty reflects tourists' commitment to repeatedly choose the same accommodation and to maintain an ongoing relationship with homestay entrepreneurs. Previous studies have extensively examined customer loyalty in service-based and tourism-related industries. In this study, the conceptualization of customer loyalty is supported by empirical research conducted by

Deventer and Redda (2023), Xing et al. (2022), and Sudirjo et al. (2023), which investigated factors influencing loyalty in hospitality and service contexts.

Customer loyalty is commonly measured through three key dimensions. First, repurchase refers to the likelihood of customers returning to the same homestay for future stays, indicating a strong attachment and preference for the service provider. Second, frequency reflects how often customers revisit the homestay, demonstrating sustained engagement and long-term relationship orientation. Third, recommendation represents customers' willingness to recommend the homestay to others, which serves as a powerful indicator of trust, satisfaction, and loyalty. Positive word-of-mouth recommendations are particularly important in homestay tourism, where personal experiences and peer evaluations strongly influence travel decisions.

The reviewed studies provide empirical evidence supporting the relationship between customer loyalty and key influencing factors such as customer satisfaction and service experience. Deventer and Redda (2023), Xing et al. (2022), and Sudirjo et al. (2023) emphasized that positive service encounters and emotional experiences play significant roles in encouraging repeat visits and recommendations. For homestay entrepreneurs in Ratchaburi Province, understanding and enhancing customer loyalty is essential for maintaining competitive advantage in a local tourism market characterized by experiential and community-based services. By addressing guest needs and delivering consistent service quality, homestay entrepreneurs can strengthen customer relationships, improve retention rates, and support sustainable business growth.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Population and Samples

In this study, the sample size was determined to meet the minimum requirement for applying structural equation modeling (SEM). According to the guideline proposed by Lindeman et al. (1980), the appropriate sample size for SEM should be at least 20 times the number of observed and latent variables to ensure statistical validity and reliable results. As this study consisted of a total of 18 observed and latent variables, the minimum recommended sample size was calculated as 360 respondents (20×18). Accordingly, data were collected from 360 homestay entrepreneurs operating in Ratchaburi Province to ensure an adequate sample size for SEM analysis.

A simple random sampling technique was employed to select participants from the target population. This method ensures that each homestay entrepreneur had an equal probability of being included in the sample, thereby minimizing sampling bias and enhancing representativeness. By adhering to the recommended sample size and employing a rigorous sampling method, the study aimed to strengthen the robustness and accuracy of the SEM analysis. A sufficiently large and representative sample enhances the validity and reliability of the findings and provides credible insights into the relationships among the studied variables.

3.2 Research Instrument and Data Collection

The primary data collection instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was subjected to content validity assessment by three experts using the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) technique. The experts evaluated the consistency between each item and the research objectives, as well as the constructs being measured. Items with high congruence were retained, while those with lower congruence were revised to ensure clarity and relevance.

In addition, a pilot test was conducted with 30 respondents who shared similar characteristics with the target population. The purpose of the pilot study was to assess the reliability of the research instrument. The results demonstrated a high level of internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.96. The combination of expert validation and reliability testing confirmed the appropriateness and consistency of the questionnaire for empirical analysis. Data collection was carried out between October 2024 and October 2025.

3.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria for participants were as follows:

1. Participants must be homestay entrepreneurs operating in **Ratchaburi Province, Thailand**.
2. Participants must have at least six months of experience operating a homestay business.
3. Participants must have hosted a minimum of ten guests during the study period.
4. Participants must be willing to provide informed consent to participate in the study.

Individuals who were not homestay entrepreneurs or were not actively engaged in homestay operations were excluded from the study.

3.4 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, including percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were employed to analyze general characteristics of the data. In addition, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), path analysis, and structural equation modeling (SEM) were used to examine the relationships among variables.

In SEM, the **measurement model** represents the relationships between latent variables and their observed indicators. The equations used to represent customer satisfaction (CS) and customer loyalty (CL) are shown below:

Measurement Model

$$CS = \beta_i CS_i + \varepsilon_1 \quad (\text{Eq. 1})$$

$$CL = \gamma_i CL_i + \varepsilon_2 \quad (\text{Eq. 2})$$

where CS_i and CL_i represent the observed indicators of customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, respectively; β_i and γ_i denote factor loadings; and ε_1 and ε_2 represent error terms accounting for unexplained variance.

The structural model was employed to examine both direct and indirect relationships among variables. The direct effects of the service marketing mix (MM) on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, as well as the mediating effect of customer satisfaction, are represented by the following equations:

Structural Model

$$CS = \lambda_1 MM + \delta_1 \quad (\text{Eq. 3})$$

$$CL = \lambda_2 MM + \delta_2 \quad (\text{Eq. 4})$$

$$CL = \lambda_3 CS + \delta_3 \quad (\text{Eq. 5})$$

$$CL = \lambda_4 MM \rightarrow CS \rightarrow CL + \delta_4 \quad (\text{Eq. 6})$$

In these equations, $\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \lambda_3,$ and λ_4 represent path coefficients indicating direct and indirect effects, while $\delta_1, \delta_2, \delta_3,$ and δ_4 denote error terms reflecting unexplained variance in customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

The results presented in Table 1 indicate that the overall mean score of the service marketing mix is 3.80 with a standard deviation of 0.62, suggesting that homestay entrepreneurs in Ratchaburi Province perceived the service marketing mix at a high level. Similarly, the mean score of customer satisfaction is 3.55 with a standard deviation of 0.68, while the mean score of customer loyalty is 3.95 with a standard deviation of 0.63, indicating a high level of customer loyalty among the respondents.

The examination of skewness and kurtosis values revealed that all variables fell within the acceptable range (absolute values less than 2), confirming that the data were normally distributed and suitable for structural equation modeling (SEM). The descriptive results also demonstrate positive relationships among the variables, suggesting that higher perceptions of the service marketing mix are associated with increased customer satisfaction, which subsequently leads to higher customer loyalty among homestay customers in Ratchaburi Province.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables (n = 360)

| Observable Variables | Mean | Std. Deviation | SK | KU | Interpretation |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------------|-------|------|----------------|
| Service Marketing Mix | 3.80 | 0.62 | -0.21 | 0.40 | High level |
| Product | 3.88 | 0.60 | -0.14 | 0.55 | High level |
| Price | 3.86 | 0.52 | 0.51 | 0.18 | High level |
| Place | 3.66 | 0.63 | -0.06 | 0.64 | High level |
| Promotion | 4.02 | 0.54 | -0.29 | 0.56 | High level |
| People | 4.12 | 0.48 | -0.43 | 0.30 | High level |
| Process | 3.62 | 0.79 | -0.15 | 0.34 | High level |
| Physical Evidence | 3.58 | 0.66 | 0.20 | 0.31 | High level |
| Customer Satisfaction | 3.55 | 0.68 | -0.13 | 0.45 | High level |
| Service Quality | 3.90 | 0.65 | 0.07 | 0.81 | High level |

| Observable Variables | Mean | Std. Deviation | SK | KU | Interpretation |
|-------------------------|-------------|----------------|-------|------|----------------|
| Perceived Value | 3.83 | 0.64 | 0.06 | 0.54 | High level |
| Brand Image | 3.70 | 0.71 | -0.22 | 0.33 | High level |
| Commitment | 3.18 | 0.79 | -0.08 | 0.25 | Medium |
| Trust | 3.12 | 0.76 | -0.23 | 0.02 | Medium |
| Customer Loyalty | 3.95 | 0.63 | -0.18 | 0.47 | High level |
| Repurchase | 4.08 | 0.54 | 0.00 | 0.70 | High level |
| Frequency | 3.86 | 0.63 | -0.04 | 0.24 | High level |
| Recommendation | 3.90 | 0.66 | -0.33 | 0.58 | High level |

4.2 Results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Table 2 presents the results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) for the latent variables, namely service marketing mix (MM), customer satisfaction (CS), and customer loyalty (CL), together with their observed indicators. The CFA results include standardized factor loadings and squared multiple correlations (R^2), which indicate the strength of the relationships between latent constructs and their observed variables, as well as the proportion of variance explained by each construct.

The results reveal that all observed variables associated with the service marketing mix, including product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence, exhibit statistically significant factor loadings ($p < 0.05$), ranging from 0.63 to 0.81. These findings confirm that all indicators are appropriate measures of the service marketing mix construct among homestay entrepreneurs in Ratchaburi Province. Among these indicators, *people* demonstrates the highest factor loading, highlighting the importance of service personnel and host-guest interaction in homestay services.

Similarly, the observed variables of customer satisfaction, comprising service quality, perceived value, brand image, commitment, and trust, show significant factor loadings ranging from 0.62 to 0.77, indicating strong convergent validity. These results suggest that the indicators effectively capture tourists' satisfaction with homestay services. Furthermore, all observed indicators of customer loyalty, including repurchase, frequency, and recommendation, also exhibit high and significant factor loadings, ranging from 0.73 to 0.82, confirming their suitability in representing customer loyalty behavior.

The overall goodness-of-fit indices indicate that the measurement model fits the empirical data well. The chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 35.12$, $df = 31$, $p = 0.11$) suggests an acceptable model fit. In addition, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value of 0.04 indicates a good fit, while the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) value of 0.01 reflects an excellent fit between the proposed measurement model and the observed data.

Table 2: Results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

| Latent Variables | Observed Variables | Factor Loadings | R^2 |
|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------|
| MM | Product | 0.73** | 0.56 |
| | Price | 0.71** | 0.54 |
| | Place | 0.77** | 0.63 |

| Latent Variables | Observed Variables | Factor Loadings | R ² |
|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| | Promotion | 0.70** | 0.54 |
| | People | 0.81** | 0.58 |
| | Process | 0.74** | 0.50 |
| | Physical Evidence | 0.63** | 0.45 |
| CS | Service Quality | 0.77** | 0.59 |
| | Perceived Value | 0.62** | 0.56 |
| | Brand Image | 0.72** | 0.55 |
| | Commitment | 0.75** | 0.54 |
| | Trust | 0.76** | 0.56 |
| CL | Repurchase | 0.82** | 0.57 |
| | Frequency | 0.73** | 0.56 |
| | Recommendation | 0.75** | 0.55 |

$\chi^2 = 35.12$, $df = 31$, $p = 0.11$, $SRMR = 0.04$, $RMSEA = 0.01$

Note: $p < 0.01$

4.3 Results of Structural Equation Model

The results of the structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis demonstrate significant direct and indirect relationships among the service marketing mix, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty for homestay entrepreneurs in Ratchaburi Province.

The standardized path coefficient between service marketing mix and customer satisfaction is 0.54 ($p < 0.01$), indicating a significant direct effect of the service marketing mix on customer satisfaction. This result suggests that improvements in service marketing elements lead to higher levels of customer satisfaction among homestay customers.

In addition, the standardized path coefficient between service marketing mix and customer loyalty is 0.38 ($p < 0.01$), confirming a significant direct effect of the service marketing mix on customer loyalty. The relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty is also positive and statistically significant, with a standardized path coefficient of 0.46 ($p < 0.01$), indicating that satisfied customers are more likely to exhibit loyal behaviors such as repeat visits and recommendations.

Regarding model fit, the goodness-of-fit indices indicate that the structural model fits the empirical data very well. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) are both reported at 0.99, suggesting an excellent model fit. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value of 0.05 indicates a good fit, while the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) value of 0.01 further confirms an excellent fit between the proposed model and the observed data.

Table 3: Relationships and Influence between Variables

| Result Variable | Customer Satisfaction | | | Customer Loyalty | | |
|---|-----------------------|------|--------|------------------|------|--------|
| | TE | IE | DE | TE | IE | DE |
| Event Variables | | | | | | |
| Service Marketing Mix | 0.54 | - | 0.54** | 0.63 | 0.25 | 0.38** |
| Customer Satisfaction | | | | 0.46 | - | 0.46** |
| R² Structural Equation Modeling | | 0.75 | | | 0.68 | |

$\chi^2 = 35.12$, $df = 31$, $p = 0.11$, $CFI = 0.99$, $TLI = 0.99$, $SRMR = 0.05$, $RMSEA = 0.01$

Notes: $p < 0.01$, TE = Total Effect, IE = Indirect Effect, DE = Direct Effect

4.4 Results of Hypothesis Testing

Table 4 presents the results of hypothesis testing derived from the structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis. The hypotheses were tested to examine both direct and indirect relationships among the service marketing mix, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty for homestay entrepreneurs in Ratchaburi Province. The hypothesis testing results were interpreted based on the standardized path coefficients reported in Table 3.

The results indicate that Hypothesis 1 (H1) is supported, as the service marketing mix has a significant direct effect on customer satisfaction (DE = 0.54, $p < 0.01$). This finding confirms that improvements in service marketing elements contribute to higher customer satisfaction among homestay customers.

Hypothesis 2 (H2) is also supported, as the service marketing mix demonstrates a significant direct effect on customer loyalty (DE = 0.38, $p < 0.01$). This result suggests that effective management of the service marketing mix directly enhances customer loyalty behaviors, such as repeat visits and recommendations.

Furthermore, Hypothesis 3 (H3) is supported, indicating that customer satisfaction has a significant direct effect on customer loyalty (DE = 0.46, $p < 0.01$). This finding highlights the crucial role of customer satisfaction in fostering loyal customer behavior in the homestay tourism context.

Finally, Hypothesis 4 (H4) is supported, as the service marketing mix has a significant indirect effect on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction (IE = 0.25), with a total effect (TE) of 0.63. This result confirms the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the relationship between the service marketing mix and customer loyalty.

Table 4: Results of Hypothesis Testing

| Hypothesis | Result |
|--|---------------|
| (H1) The service marketing mix has a direct effect on customer satisfaction among homestay entrepreneurs in Ratchaburi Province. | Accepted |
| (H2) The service marketing mix has a direct effect on customer loyalty among homestay entrepreneurs in Ratchaburi Province. | Accepted |
| (H3) Customer satisfaction has a direct effect on customer loyalty among homestay entrepreneurs in Ratchaburi Province. | Accepted |
| (H4) The service marketing mix has an indirect effect on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction among homestay entrepreneurs in Ratchaburi Province. | Accepted |

4.5 Model Construct

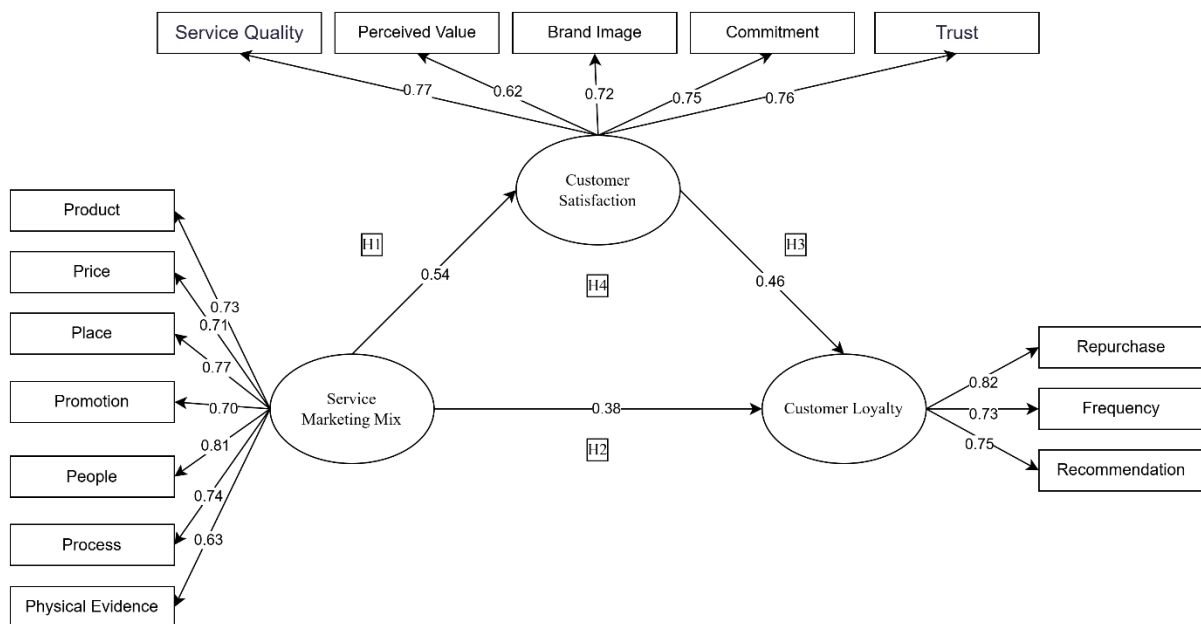
Figure 1 illustrates the structural model linking the latent variables and their observed indicators, together with the standardized path coefficients obtained from the structural equation modeling analysis. The model demonstrates the relationships among the service

marketing mix, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty for homestay entrepreneurs in Ratchaburi Province.

The results indicate that the service marketing mix has a significant direct effect on customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.54$) and a significant direct effect on customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.38$). In addition, customer satisfaction exerts a significant direct influence on customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.46$), highlighting its important role in shaping loyal customer behavior.

Furthermore, the model confirms that the service marketing mix also has an indirect effect on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction, with a mediating effect value of 0.25. This finding suggests that customer satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between the service marketing mix and customer loyalty. Overall, the structural model provides empirical support for the proposed conceptual framework, demonstrating that effective management of the service marketing mix enhances customer satisfaction, which in turn strengthens customer loyalty in the homestay tourism context.

Figure 1. Structural Model of Customer Loyalty for Homestay Entrepreneurs in Ratchaburi Province



5. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to develop and empirically validate a structural model of customer loyalty for homestay entrepreneurs in Ratchaburi Province, Thailand, by examining the relationships among the service marketing mix, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. Using structural equation modeling (SEM), the study provides evidence-based insights into how service-related factors influence customer behavior in the context of community-based and experiential tourism.

The findings indicate that the service marketing mix plays a significant role in enhancing both customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. The confirmatory factor analysis results demonstrate that all dimensions of the service marketing mix—product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence—are valid indicators of the construct. Among these, the *people* dimension shows the strongest factor loading, underscoring the importance of host-guest interactions, service attitudes, and interpersonal communication in homestay services.

Furthermore, the results confirm that customer satisfaction has a direct and significant effect on customer loyalty, indicating that satisfied customers are more likely to revisit homestay accommodations and recommend them to others. The structural model also reveals that customer satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between the service marketing mix and customer loyalty. This finding suggests that while effective service marketing strategies can directly foster loyalty, their impact is strengthened when customers perceive high levels of satisfaction.

Overall, the validated model highlights that customer loyalty in homestay tourism is not solely driven by tangible service attributes, but rather by an integrated service experience that combines service quality, perceived value, trust, commitment, and positive brand image. For homestay entrepreneurs in Ratchaburi Province, these findings emphasize the importance of managing service operations holistically, with particular attention to human elements and service delivery processes.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the existing literature on service marketing and tourism management by providing a context-specific model of customer loyalty in homestay tourism. The results offer practical implications for homestay entrepreneurs and local tourism stakeholders seeking to enhance service quality, improve customer satisfaction, and build long-term customer loyalty in provincial tourism destinations.

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