

Causal Effects of Service Marketing Mix Factors and Reference Groups to Undergo Cosmetic Surgery of Generation Z Consumers

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The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that impact the decision-making process of consumers of Generation Z in Bangkok who are considering cosmetic surgery, as well as the influence of reference groups and the moderating role that desires for cosmetic surgery play in that decision-making process. The sample for this study comprised four hundred Generation Z members who were residents of Bangkok. A questionnaire was used to collect data. The data analysis was carried out with PLS-SEM. It was found that the quality of the product or service, employee factors, physical environment, and influence of reference groups have a predictive power of 63.8% for consumers' decision on cosmetic surgery. Therefore, cosmetic surgery business owners need to develop marketing strategies based on the preferences of their target audience and focus on offering high-quality products and services with a distinctive identity through various communication channels, especially online platforms. This includes maintaining a positive business image and reputation. In addition, creating a positive environment and providing excellent customer service is crucial to maintaining positive relationships with Generation Z consumers.

Keywords: Marketing Mix, Reference Group Influence, Cosmetic Surgery Decision Making, Cosmetic Surgery Desire, and Generation

1. INTRODUCTION

The market value of cosmetic surgery has climbed from more than 30,000 million baht in 2016 to more than 45,000 million baht in 2018 due to the massive spike in demand over the past several years. This market has quickly rebounded despite the considerable impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on the market value. Some supporting causes include the desire to improve one's look, concerns about wrinkles and skin aging, and developments in modern and safe technology (Post Today, 2023). According to a survey published by Grand View Research (2021), the global market's value for the beauty enhancement business is projected to reach 216 billion US dollars by the year 2027. This is equivalent to around 7.14 trillion baht.

The fact that Thailand is now ranked 14th in the world in terms of the number of cosmetic modifications performed has led Krungthai Compass (2023) to conclude that Thailand's beauty business has the potential to experience expansion. In addition, the percentage of Thai clients interested in these operations has been steadily climbing for some time now. Additionally, Thailand is known for its high-quality and standardized medical treatment, and its healthcare expenditures are far cheaper than those in adjacent and leading countries, such as the United States (50-120%), Singapore (24%), and South Korea (7%). Given the expanding market scenario and value, this has spurred industry players' interest in understanding better the motivational factors and decision-making processes of customers interested in cosmetic surgery (Lorenzin et al., 2021). Dr. Thanachai Adasangklan, cosmetic surgeon and head of the Cosmetic Surgery Center at Bangmod Hospital, has noticed a growing trend towards cosmetic surgery among Thais. Popular procedures include the modern facelift, the temporal lift (foxy eyes), hybrid gluteal augmentation (HGA), and modern breast augmentation. He attributes the preference for domestic surgery to the trustworthiness and expertise of Thai surgeons known worldwide for their impressive results. Given Thailand's reputation for standardized prices and excellent surgical results, international patients are increasingly opting for surgery in Thailand based on positive feedback and word-of-mouth (Bang Mod Aesthetic Center, 2022).

It has been discovered, however, that there needs to be more research on the motivations and decision-making processes of Generation Z consumers in Thailand regarding cosmetic surgery. This knowledge gap requires urgent research in the field of marketing to identify relevant information that can assist businesses in meeting the requirements of Generation Z consumers. The absence of such knowledge could make it difficult for businesses to meet the needs of Generation Z consumers, resulting in adverse outcomes for both consumers and businesses to avoid negative consequences and increase the efficiency of business operations in response to the demands of Generation Z consumers, urgent research is required (Lee & Lee, 2019).

In Thailand, Generation Z, which consists of people born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, profoundly impacts the beauty industry. This digitally savvy and socially conscious demographic is changing traditional beauty norms and driving demand for products and practices that align with their values. With a keen eye for authenticity and individuality, Generation Z consumers in Thailand reject uniform beauty ideals in favor of diversity and inclusivity (Yanhee International Hospital, 2022). They are looking for brands championing diversity in their marketing campaigns and offering a wide range of products suitable for different skin colors, types, and identities. In addition, social media plays a crucial role in shaping beauty trends and consumer behavior among Thai youth. Generation Z is heavily influenced by social media, where they discover new products, get inspired by influencers, and share their beauty routines and recommendations (Manager Online, 2022). Beauty brands that effectively utilize social media marketing and collaborate with popular influencers can significantly increase their visibility and credibility among Generation Z consumers in Thailand (Rapeepongphatthana, 2018). Therefore, Generation Z is redefining beauty standards and expectations in Thailand, prompting beauty businesses to adapt their strategies to cater to this dynamic and demanding demographic. Beauty

brands can successfully connect with Generation Z and thrive in Thailand's ever-evolving beauty landscape by focusing on diversity, sustainability, and digital engagement.

The culture and standards of beauty have been imported into Thai society as a result of the global trend of plastic surgery. As a direct consequence, new generations of consumers, especially members of Generation Z, have developed a more favorable attitude toward cosmetic surgical procedures. Due to advertisements and media exposure of influential and widely acknowledged figures in society, this consumer group now has an increased desire to enhance their appearance through plastic surgery. This desire has become widespread among this consumer group. The factors mentioned earlier heavily influence deciding whether to have plastic surgery. The product, the pricing, the place, the advertising, and the service aspects such as staff, service processes, and the physical environment are all marketing factors. These marketing variables are essential marketing tools for businesses in the beauty sector. According to Ciric and Radulovic (2019), businesses in the beauty industry are currently competing not just in terms of product quality but also in terms of price, marketing communication, and exceeding the expectations of customers concerning service. In addition, the influence of reference groups, particularly those with a notable reputation, personal image, and appealing appearance as a result of plastic surgery, is a crucial element that contributes to the widespread occurrence of plastic surgery (Wright & McCarthy, 2010). A battle for market share and influence in the plastic surgery industry, especially among presenters and influencers, has ensued as a direct consequence of this development.

This circumstance has driven businesses in the cosmetic surgery industry to modify their marketing strategies through product development, pricing, and promotion strategies that are more suitable and appealing to this target market. Madi and Abdallah (2019) confirmed that marketing mix factors and the influence of this reference group have a significant impact on the decision to undergo cosmetic surgery. Dolgin and Yin (2018) also highlighted the importance of reference groups in the decision-making process. By identifying individuals with influence over the presentation of the business's products and services to the target consumer group, the business can establish positive relationships, trust, and a positive reputation. Additionally, the involvement of specialized experts enhances the beauty surgery decision-making process, as these individuals can provide clear advice and consultation with high levels of information and accountability, resulting in greater consumer confidence and safety (Roberts & Goldwyn, 2021).

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effects of marketing mix variables, the influence of reference groups on consumers' decisions regarding cosmetic surgery, and the mediating effect of the desire for cosmetic surgery. As Bangkok is the capital city of Thailand and has many renowned hospitals and clinics specializing in cosmetic surgeries and easy access to these services, this study primarily focuses on the Generation Z consumer group in Bangkok, Thailand. Businesses will be able to design more successful marketing strategies by better understanding the impact of the influence of reference groups and the components of the marketing mix.

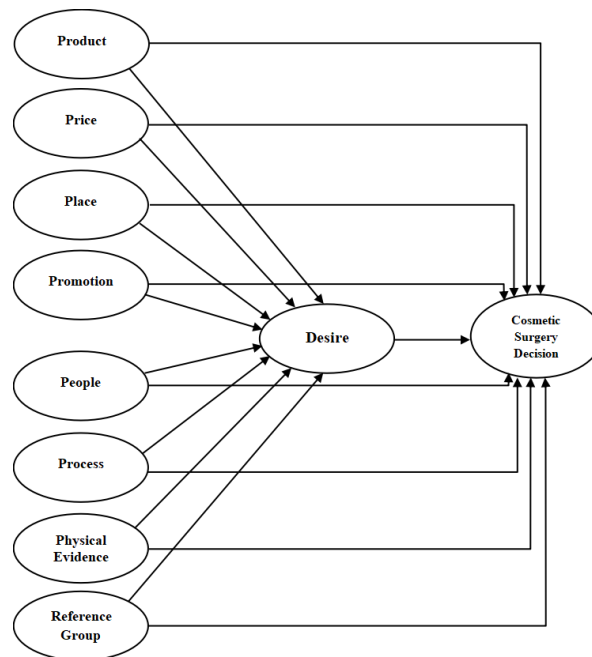


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Literature Review

Conceptual framework and theoretical factors of the service marketing mix (7P's)

The concept and theoretical framework of the service marketing mix, also known as the 7P's, was initially developed by Booms and Bitner (1981) as a foundation for understanding the development of effective marketing strategies for service organizations. The 7P's are also known as the "service marketing mix." Since then, numerous economic sectors have widely adopted this idea. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), the seven components that make up the service marketing mix are as follows: the product, the pricing, the place or distribution channels, the promotion, the people, the process, and the physical evidence.

According to Hsu and Liang (2016), understanding the relationship between various service components and designing and developing marketing strategies that motivate customer purchasing decisions is beneficial to businesses. Service marketing mix variables assist businesses in comprehending this relationship. Due to the variety of offerings, such as breast augmentation, rhinoplasty, and liposuction, the formulation of the marketing mix strategy for a cosmetic surgery business places primary emphasis on products and services. Consequently, pricing varies based on business expenses, location, and marketing efforts. Therefore, marketing mix components play a crucial role in determining the marketing strategy of beauty surgery businesses to effectively meet consumer needs, including pricing that reflects the quality and reputation of the business, selection of experienced and reputable surgeons, and promotion via online channels and social media platforms preferred by modern consumers (Chang et al., 2018).

H1: The service marketing mix affects the desire and decision for cosmetic surgery among Generation Z consumers.

Concepts and Theories of Reference Groups

According to Sherif and Sherif (2019), the concept and theory of Reference Group refer to a group that acts as a point of comparison for individuals to analyze their attitudes, behaviors, and ideas. Accordingly, the Reference Group theory is associated with the attitudes, behaviors, and opinions of individuals that are influenced by various Reference Groups such as friends, family, and prominent individuals, leading consumers to adopt imitation behaviors and positive attitudes towards these groups, as well as the desire to be members of these groups (Merton & Rossi, 2019). In the context of cosmetic surgery, reference groups have a substantial influence on preferences and decision-making. For instance, customers desire an appearance and personality comparable to that of famous people or social media influencers (Wright & McCarthy, 2010). In addition, Reference Groups impact the formation of social norms and values connected to the acceptance of cosmetic surgery (Lorencin et al., 2021). Therefore, reference groups are essential in consumers' desire and decision-making regarding cosmetic surgery (Dolgin & Yin, 2018). This is because the individuals who make up Reference Groups help consumers improve their attitudes, behaviors, and positive opinions regarding cosmetic surgery, in addition to providing consumers with helpful advice and supportive information (Roberts & Goldwyn, 2021).

H2: Reference groups influence the desire and decision to undergo cosmetic surgery among Generation Z consumers.

Concepts and theories of the desire for cosmetic surgery.

In recent years, the cosmetic surgery industry has made greater use of concepts and theories of desire for cosmetic surgery as a marketing tool to foster favorable perceptions of cosmetic surgery and its potential to bring one's self-image in line with societal norms and one's confidence levels up (Vartanian & Shaprow, 2018). According to Higgins (1987), the desire for cosmetic surgery can be explained by the self-discrepancy theory, which posits that people have a gap between their "real" and "ideal" selves and that this gap can be closed by cosmetic surgery. There is also the social comparison theory, which proposes that people seek cosmetic surgery because they compare themselves to others and want to live up to the ideals of beauty propagated by the cosmetic surgery business (Festinger, 1954). Understanding these theories is critical for businesses in the cosmetic surgery industry because they shed light on the complex interplay of psychological, social, and cultural factors that influence the desire for cosmetic surgery.

H3: Desire influences the decision to undergo cosmetic surgery in Generation Z.

Concepts and Theories of Purchasing Decision-making.

The process, methods, and factors that influence consumer decision-making are referred to as "the theory of purchasing decision" in both the idea and the theory of purchasing decision. This helps to explain why customers make decisions to purchase various items or services, how much money they spend, and who they buy from (Solomon et al., 2021). According to the proposal made by Kotler, Keller, and Aprea (2022), the process of researching how consumers make purchasing decisions should be broken down into five distinct stages: the problem recognition stage, the information search stage, the alternative evaluation stage, and the purchase decision stage. Internal elements such as motivation, personality, and attitudes can be categorized as internal factors, and external aspects such as social factors, culture, and the economy can be categorized as external factors (Schiffman et al., 2022). These are the factors that impact purchase decisions.

According to Sarwer, Crerand, and Magee (2016), consumers' purchasing decisions in the setting of cosmetic surgery are complicated and interwoven with personal, societal, and cultural aspects. These factors produce cognitive and emotional processes distinct from those in other product purchasing contexts. Consumers, for instance, are more likely to contemplate cosmetic surgery if they believe that others who have used it as a quick and easy option to address physical defects or shortcomings have had great results as a result of their decision to undergo the procedure. Alternately, they may be influenced by psychological elements such as self-esteem, body image, and social comparison (Vartanian & Shaprow, 2018).

In the AIDA model, desire proves to be a crucial mediator for Generation Z consumers considering cosmetic surgery, bridging the gap between initial interest and eventual action. For this demographic, desire encompasses a yearning for physical change and a quest for greater self-confidence and social acceptance. When navigating the myriad of options in the Bangkok cosmetic surgery market, Generation Z's desires, influenced by social norms and personal aspirations, play a crucial role in translating interest into concrete choices. Marketers and cosmetic surgery providers can harness this understanding to develop strategies that appeal to Generation Z's emotional motivations by emphasizing authenticity and inclusivity while promoting transparency and ethical practices to build lasting relationships with discerning customers.

H4: Desire influences a mediating variable.

METHODS

1. This study's population and sample group consisted of general consumers who are part of the Generation Z group and reside in Bangkok. These consumers ranged in age from 20 to 24 years old. According to the population statistics data from Thailand that were collected by the National Statistical Office in 2019, the total number of persons living in Bangkok who were within the age above range was 4,317,497. The confidence level was 95%, and the margin of error was limited to no more than 5%. The sample size was figured out by applying the formula for estimating the sample size of a population, which is known according to Yamane (1973), who established the formula. As a result, the sample size was determined to be 400. In addition, statistical analysis was performed using a Partial Least Square Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM), which did not include a condition that required increasing the sample size for each observed variable. Therefore, a sample size of 400 was appropriate for the data investigation. This research also used a convenient sampling strategy by collecting data using online channels that set screening questions to guarantee that the sample group fit the features of the intended research until the necessary sample size was attained. This method was used until the desired sample size was achieved.

2. In this study, a questionnaire was created after researching previous studies. The survey is divided into five sections, the first of which is concerned with general respondent characteristics, the second with the 7Ps of the service marketing mix, the third with the impact of peer influence, the fourth with the motivation to have cosmetic surgery, and the fifth with the decision-making process leading up to the decision. The items in the questionnaire were scored on a 5-point scale and sorted into interval categories. The content validity index (IOC) was used to verify the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, and it was found that each item scored over 0.66. The reliability of the questionnaire was also examined, and the results showed a high level of dependability (coefficient alpha value more than 0.7), indicating that the questionnaire is a trustworthy tool for scientific inquiry.

3. The data analysis method employed in the research included inferential statistics. One was a partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), a second-order factor analysis.

This type of data analysis also incorporated descriptive statistics into its process. The descriptive statistics included frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

RESULTS

1. A general data analysis of the questionnaire respondents revealed that the majority of respondents were female, with a total of 210 individuals (52.50%), and that the majority of respondents were between the ages of 22 and 23 years old, with a total of 118 individuals (29.50%). In addition, most respondents were either undergraduate students (with a total of 183 individuals comprising 45.75%) or were currently enrolled in some form of educational institution (138 individuals comprising 34.50%). There was a total of 149 individuals, and the wage range for this group (37.25%) ranged from 10,001 to 20,000 Baht on an average monthly basis.

2. Examining the views of individuals who filled out the questionnaire showed that the most significant desire for cosmetic surgery was towards the decision-making process. After that came the desire to acquire cosmetic surgery, the thoughts connected to the market service, and the influence of reference groups in that particular order. The particulars of each element are laid out in Table 1, which can be found here.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation values of the questionnaire respondents' opinions.

Factors	$\bar{X}$	SD	Level of Opinion
The Factors of Marketing Mix in Services	3.88	0.62	High
P1: Product/Service aspect	3.92	0.68	High
P2: Price aspect	3.88	0.71	High
P3: Distribution channel aspect	3.89	0.70	High
P4: Promotion aspect	3.86	0.79	High
P5: Personnel aspect	3.86	0.71	High
P6: Process aspect	3.94	0.75	High
P7: Physical environment aspect	3.84	0.72	High
The Influence of Reference Groups	3.82	0.76	High
Ref1: Narrative Accounts of Surgical Experiences from Friends	3.65	1.05	High
Ref2: Impressions of Celebrities or Famous Individuals	3.85	0.94	High
Ref3: Norms of the General Population	3.85	0.95	High
Ref4: Acceptance of Cosmetic Surgery by the Social Group	3.85	0.96	High
Ref5: Cosmetic Surgery Can Enhance Social Opportunities	3.93	0.94	High
The Desire for Cosmetic Surgery	3.89	0.69	High
D1: Cosmetic surgery helps to correct defects and imperfections of the body and face.	3.78	0.94	High
D2: Cosmetic surgery has an impact on opportunities for social acceptance.	3.81	0.96	High

D3: Cosmetic surgery creates self-confidence.	3.95	0.91	High
D4: Cosmetic surgery enhances beauty for emotional well-being.	3.98	0.88	High
Decision-making in cosmetic surgery	3.90	0.69	High
Y1: The decision to undergo cosmetic surgery is suitable for future opportunities.	3.85	0.90	High
Y2: Decision-making for cosmetic surgery involves thorough consideration.	3.92	0.90	High
Y3: The decision to undergo cosmetic surgery can best fulfill one's desires.	3.90	0.90	High
Y4: Confident that the decision to undergo cosmetic surgery is suitable.	3.96	0.85	High
Y5: Despite others' objections to cosmetic surgery, the decision to proceed is affirmed.	3.86	0.99	High

Results of hypothesis testing

Table 2 presents the results of the structural validity and component weight testing.

Factors	Loading	AVE	Dijkstra-Henseler's rho (ρ_A)	Jöreskog's rho (ρ_C)	Cronbach's alpha(α)
Products/Services		.60	.84	.88	.83
- Product1	.74				
- Product2	.80				
- Product3	.82				
- Product4	.75				
- Product5	.77				
Prices		.62	.81	.87	.80
- Price1	.83				
- Price2	.83				
- Price3	.72				
- Price4	.78				
Distribution Channels		.64	.87	.90	.86
- Place1	.79				
- Place2	.83				
- Place3	.81				
- Place4	.76				
- Place5	.82				
Marketing Promotions		.62	.85	.89	.85
- Promotion1	.77				
- Promotion2	.81				
- Promotion3	.77				
- Promotion4	.82				
- Promotion5	.77				
Employees		.64	.86	.90	.86

- People1	.78				
- People2	.85				
- People3	.82				
- People4	.75				
- People5	.79				
The Process of Services		.62	.86	.89	.85
- Process1	.73				
- Process2	.79				
- Process3	.80				
- Process4	.80				
- Process5	.83				
Physical environment conditions		.60	.84	.88	.84
- Physical1	.80				
- Physical2	.80				
- Physical3	.81				
- Physical4	.72				
- Physical5	.76				
The Influence of Reference Groups		.62	.85	.89	.85
- Ref1	.77				
- Ref2	.80				
- Ref3	.82				
- Ref4	.78				
- Ref5	.77				
The Desire for Cosmetic Surgery		.61	.84	.89	.84
- D1	.77				
- D2	.81				
- D3	.83				
- D4	.73				
Decision-making in cosmetic surgery		.62	.80	.87	.79
- Y1	.77				
- Y2	.76				
- Y3	.83				
- Y4	.78				
- Y5	.78				

According to Table 2, all the observed variables in the model had weight values greater than 0.5, ranging from 0.72 to 0.85. In addition, Dijkstra-Henseler's rho (A), Joreskog's rho (c), and Cronbach's alpha (α) were all more than 7. Joreskog's rho (c) was between 87 and 90, while Cronbach's alpha (α) was between 79 and 86. In addition, it was demonstrated that latent variables

have discriminant validity, as revealed by AVE values greater than 0.5, ranging from 0.60 to 0.64 (Henseler et al., 2016).

Table 3 shows the discriminant validity as measured by the Fornell-Larcker criterion

Construct	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Ref
P1: Products/Services	.60							
P2: Prices	.46	.62						
P3: Distribution Channels	.39	.46	.64					
P4: Promotion of Marketing Activities	.44	.42	.56	.62				
P5: Employees	.35	.38	.39	.44	.64			
P6: The Process of Services	.37	.48	.58	.46	.31	.62		
P7: Physical environment conditions	.36	.44	.54	.54	.55	.44	.60	
The Influence of Reference Groups	.19	.23	.29	.30	.33	.23	.30	.62
Desire: The Desire for Cosmetic Surgery	.31	.25	.35	.34	.29	.22	.33	.45
Y: Decision-making in cosmetic surgery	.34	.30	.35	.35	.28	.26	.37	.46

According to Table 2, discriminant validity, measured by the average variance extracted (AVE), was more significant than correlations with other latent variables. This was determined by the diagonal values of the matrix (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 4 illustrates hypothesis testing

Effect	Direct effects	Indirect effects	t-value	p-value	Cohen's F ²
Products/Service -> The Desire for Cosmetic Surgery	.25	-	4.48	.00***	0.07
Prices -> The Desire for Cosmetic Surgery	.06	-	0.86	.19	0.00
Distribution Channels -> The Desire for Cosmetic Surgery	.10	-	1.42	.08	0.01
Promotion of Marketing Activities -> The Desire for Cosmetic Surgery	.06	-	0.77	.22	0.00
Employees -> The Desire for Cosmetic Surgery	.11	-	1.75	.04*	0.01
The Process of Services -> The Desire for	-.08	-	-1.31	.10	0.01

Cosmetic Surgery Physical environment conditions -> The Desire for Cosmetic Surgery	.19	-	2.72	.00**	0.03
The Influence of Reference Groups -> The Desire for Cosmetic Surgery	.46	-	9.44	.00***	0.32
Products/Service -> Decision-making in cosmetic surgery	.13	.10	1.94	.03*	0.02
Prices -> Decision-making in cosmetic surgery	-.04	.02	-0.67	.25	0.00
Distribution Channels -> Decision-making in cosmetic surgery	.17	.04	2.67	.00**	0.02
Promotion of Marketing Activities -> Decision-making in cosmetic surgery	.05	.02	0.69	.25	0.00
Employees -> Decision-making in cosmetic surgery	.04	.04	0.78	.22	0.00
The Process of Services -> Decision-making in Cosmetic Surgery	-.11	-.03	-1.54	.06	0.01
Physical	.00	.08	-0.04	.49	0.00

environment
conditions ->

Decision-
making in
cosmetic
surgery

The Influence of Reference Groups ->	.26	.19	4.06	.00***	0.08
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Decision-
making in
Cosmetic
Surgery

The Desire for Cosmetic Surgery ->	.42	-	5.96	.00***	0.19
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Decision-
making in
Cosmetic
Surgery

***Statistically significant results at the .001 level, **Statistically significant results at the .01 level, and *Statistically significant results at the .05 level.

Table 3 shows that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between the marketing mix components Products/Services (DE =.13, t = 1.94, p-value =.03), Distribution Channels (DE =.17, t = 2.67, p-value =.00), The Influence of Reference Group (DE =.26, t = 4.06, p-value =.00), and desire (DE =.42, t = 5.96, p-value =.00). The percentage of correct predictions is 63.8%. As a result, The desire for cosmetic surgery among Bangkok's millennials is positively influenced by the marketing mix components of Products/Services (DE =.25, t = 4.48, p-value =.00), Employees (DE =.11, t = 1.75, p-value =.04), Physical Environment Conditions (DE =.19, t = 2.72), and The Influence of Reference Group (DE =.46, t = 9.44, p-value =.00). The power of discrimination in prediction is equivalent to 59.6 percent.

According to the findings of the study, various aspects of Products/Services (IE =.10), Employees (IE =.04), Physical Environmental Conditions (IE =.08), and The Influence of Reference Groups (IE =.19) have a favorable indirect impact on the decision to undergo cosmetic surgery among Gen Z customers in Bangkok. Indirectly, this has a positive effect on decision-making when undergoing cosmetic surgery. As shown in Figure 2 below, there is a statistically significant interest in undergoing some form of cosmetic surgery.

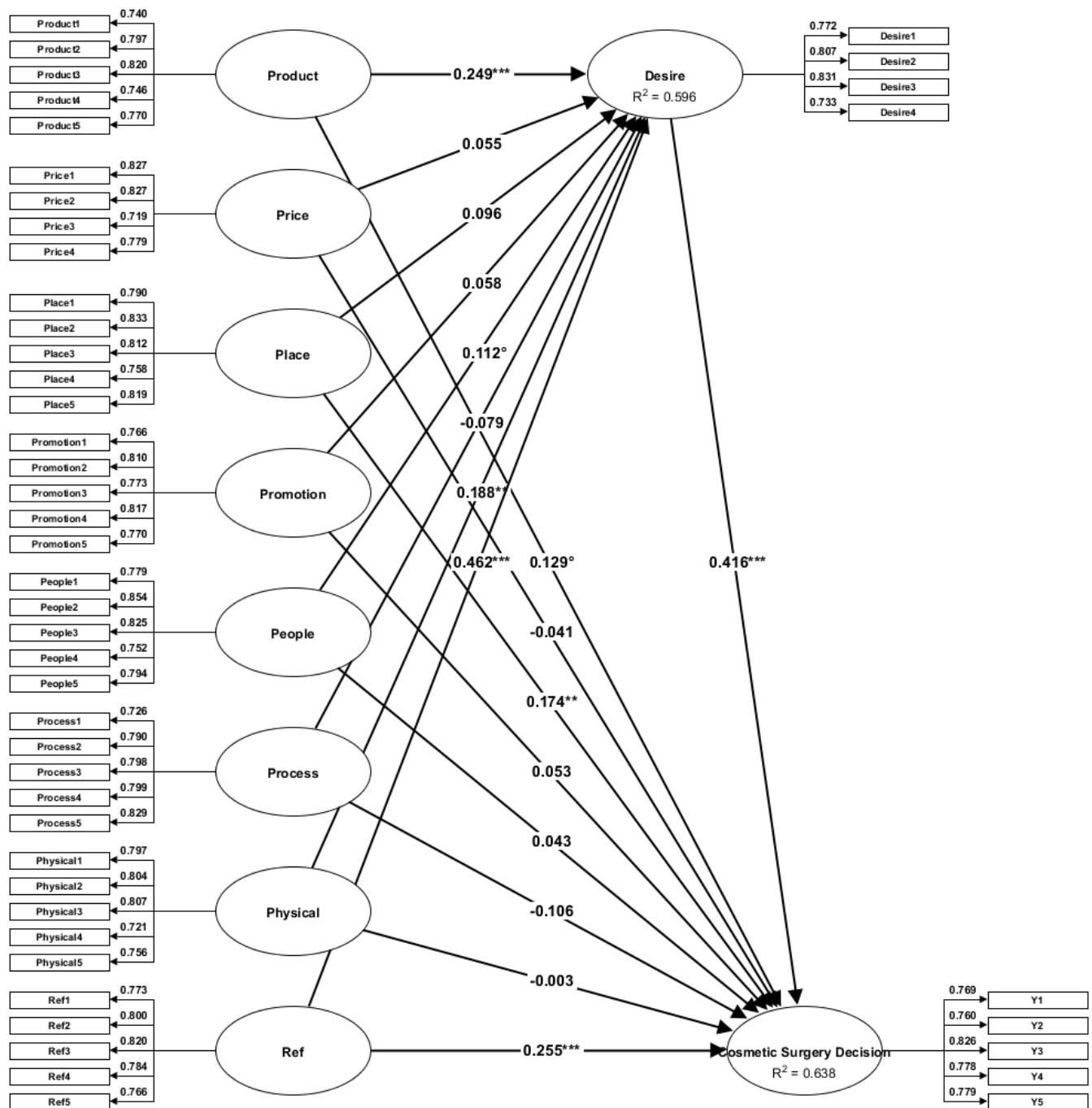


Figure 2: The results of hypothesis testing

DISCUSSION

According to the findings of this research, the components of the marketing mix, which include the product or service, distribution channels, the effect of reference groups, and desire, have a significant and beneficial direct impact on the decisions that Generation Z customers make regarding cosmetic surgery. This is statistically significant since the marketing mix variables in products and services reveal customer opinions on the quality and characteristics of the products and services offered by the cosmetic surgery business. These customer opinions have a direct

impact on the decision-making process that consumers go through to determine whether they should get cosmetic surgery. This notion and that of Kotler and Keller (2016), who claim that products are an essential component in developing consumer demand for goods and services because they possess the quality and characteristics that consumers seek, are supported by this study. Similarly, the influence of distribution channels demonstrates the readiness and accessibility of goods and services offered by the cosmetic surgery company through a range of channels. This may be said in the same vein as the impact of distribution channels. This greatly influences the decision that the typical customer makes in the present day on whether or not to receive cosmetic surgery. The product element in the marketing mix concept has the most significant influence on cosmetic surgery. It encompasses quality, customization, and branding, significantly influencing Generation Z's choices as they look for authentic, customized solutions that match their values and desires. Cosmetic surgery business owners should focus on providing high-quality services, offering customized procedures, and developing authentic brand messaging to appeal to Generation Z consumers effectively. The location of cosmetic surgery clinics and hospitals significantly impacts their ranking with Generation Z. Business owners in this industry should strategically select locations that prioritize accessibility, convenience, and reputation to attract more customers. Investing in prime locations with high visibility and near transportation hubs can increase foot traffic and service demand. In addition, leveraging the prestige associated with specific locations, such as prestigious medical districts or upscale neighborhoods, can signal professionalism and expertise. A robust digital presence complementing physical locations is also critical to appealing to Generation Z consumers. Entrepreneurs can effectively improve their ranking and appeal in the competitive cosmetic surgery market by focusing on strategic location selection and digital marketing efforts. According to Toker, Mutlu, and Kaya (2019), this requires acquiring knowledge, being in the appropriate location, and having access to suitable communication channels. In line with the findings of Oh and Kim's (2020) study, which discovered that the decision to select a cosmetic surgery clinic is influenced by factors such as the credibility of the clinic, the expertise of the physician, the ease with which information can be accessed, and the convenience of the services provided.

Nevertheless, the influence of reference groups among consumers who fall into this category directly impacts the decision to undergo cosmetic surgery. This is because it is a factor that leads to attitudes and behaviors that mimic the reference group, such as friends, celebrities, or social media influencers, which play a crucial role in consumers' decision to undergo cosmetic surgery (Engeln-Maddox et al., 2015). This is the case because it is a factor that leads to attitudes and behaviors that mimic the reference group. This is consistent with the findings of the study by Sobhani, Khan, and Mohanty (2019), which found that the influence of reference groups, particularly those found in online social media, significantly impacts the decision to have cosmetic surgery. However, specific reference groups can also hurt the decision to have cosmetic surgery, for example, people who have undergone unsuccessful operations or who have experienced complications after surgery. If these people are known or have had the opportunity to make their experiences public, this can change the research results. To turn such crises into opportunities, entrepreneurs in the cosmetic surgery industry need to use these individuals as spokespeople to showcase the results achieved through advanced medical techniques or technologies and bring them to the public through various media channels and online platforms for consumers to learn about them.

Additionally, the desire to have cosmetic surgery directly impacts consumer decision-making regarding cosmetic surgery. This is because the desire for cosmetic surgery is an internal motivating factor determining the behavior of changing one's appearance to match the reflection in the consumer's mindset (Harcourt et al., 2015). This finding is in line with the study conducted by

Luedicke, Krippendorff, and Seidlitz (2016). That study discovered that the desire to alter one's look is significant in choosing cosmetic surgery.

Despite this, the findings of this study showed that the marketing mix aspects of product/service, personnel, physical environment, and reference group all had a favorable influence on the decision-making process of Thai customers in Bangkok about cosmetic surgery. Because of the significance of these aspects of the marketing mix, the desire for cosmetic surgery has reached a statistically significant level. These factors, especially having personnel skilled and experienced in postoperative patient care, can promote confidence and happiness in the products and services given by the cosmetic surgery business. This is especially true regarding the products and services the cosmetic surgery business offers. According to Karam, Capella, and Valencia (2017), providing a postoperative cosmetic surgery patient with a physically comfortable and appropriate atmosphere can lead to increased customer satisfaction and convenience for the patient. Aligned with the research of Cochran, Barry, Crandall, and Brasel (2019), it was found that employee readiness and a comfortable and convenient environment for post-cosmetic surgery patients impact satisfaction. Lastly, the influence of reference groups has a direct and indirect impact as consumers in this group tend to have attitudes related to appearance changes or facial features based on following trends and the popularity of cosmetic surgery. They also perceive and present products and services through reputable and influential influencers in various fields to find the most suitable and aligned model with their preferences (Toma et al., 2018). This is consistent with Etcoff, Orbach, Scott, and D'Agostino's (2017) research, which found that presenting cosmetic surgery through television and various media impacts consumer decision-making and customization of their features.

CONCLUSIONS

The cosmetic surgery field would benefit from placing a significant emphasis on developing marketing techniques that align with the criteria of its ideal customers. Since the services marketing mix can effectively influence Generation Z consumers' decision to undergo cosmetic surgery, prioritizing marketing strategies for product/service development and distribution channels is paramount. This includes developing high-quality products/services with unique features that set them apart. Utilizing a variety of distribution channels, especially online platforms favored by Generation Z, is essential to reach target customers. In addition, it is vital to maintain a strong brand image and reputation that resonates well with customers. In addition, partnerships with influential social media and entertainment personalities, including world-famous celebrities and artists, can be strong ambassadors for the business and inspire interest and trust among consumers considering cosmetic surgery. However, business owners should also strive to turn individuals who have experienced problems through surgery into influential figures in the field of surgery to demonstrate success and instill hope in others facing similar problems, ultimately converting them into future customers.

Following this, a marketing plan that emphasizes creating a good environment and providing expert service through people for pre- and postoperative care while maintaining positive connections is recommended. The predictions made by the results of this model indicate that the factors associated with service marketing and the impact of reference groups are significant for businesses and medical professionals working in the cosmetic surgery industry. Therefore, it is essential to use the results of this research to investigate and understand customers' needs. This will ultimately lead to the development of appropriate marketing strategies and the development of highly efficient and qualified personnel to improve decision-making in the cosmetic surgery sector, which is crucial.

Suggestions for future research

The following study is suggested to look at the quality-of-service models in aesthetic clinics. The framework of quality service concepts and theories should be used to investigate the

qualitative and quantitative components. This will provide direction and techniques for providing customer services appropriate to their needs. Furthermore, reviewing the service procedures that meet the pre- and post-service standards is critical to discovering inadequacies and significant problems that consumers encounter while waiting. This data can be utilized to boost corporate efficiency. Furthermore, future research should categorize aesthetic surgery types to identify the fraction of surgical demand for each type. This will allow for expanding and preparing more specialist medical personnel to meet future demand.

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