

Customer Satisfaction with Haidilao Hot Pot in Guiyang, China: An Empirical Analysis Based on the 4Ps Marketing Strategies

*Ren Yuanyuan¹, Yarnaphat Shaengchart²
Pathumthani University, Thailand¹
International College, Pathumthani University, Thailand²
yarnaphat.s@ptu.ac.th*

Abstract

Objective: The objectives of this study were to: (1) examine the effects of the 4Ps Marketing Strategies—Product, Price, Place, and Promotion—on customer satisfaction with Haidilao Hot Pot in Guiyang, China; and (2) assess the applicability of the traditional 4P marketing framework in explaining customer satisfaction in a developing second-tier city context.

Methods: This study employed a quantitative research approach. The population consisted of customers who had previously dined at Haidilao Hot Pot restaurants in Guiyang. A total of 497 valid questionnaires were collected using convenience sampling, exceeding the minimum sample size required for an unknown population. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire measured on a five-point Likert scale. Reliability analysis confirmed high internal consistency. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were used to analyze the data.

Results: The findings revealed that all four dimensions of the marketing mix—Product, Price, Place, and Promotion—have significant positive effects on customer satisfaction. Among these factors, Product and Price exerted relatively stronger influences, indicating that food quality and perceived price fairness play a dominant role in shaping customer satisfaction. Place-related factors, including location convenience and dining environment, as well as Promotion, also contributed positively, although to a lesser extent.

Conclusion: The study confirms the continued relevance of the 4Ps Marketing Strategies framework in the restaurant industry and highlights the importance of value-oriented marketing strategies in developing second-tier cities. To enhance customer satisfaction, restaurant managers should prioritize improvements in product quality and pricing strategies, while optimizing dining environments and aligning promotional activities with actual service performance.

Keywords: Customer Satisfaction, 4Ps Marketing Strategies, Restaurant Industry, Haidilao Hot Pot

Introduction

With the rapid development and structural transformation of the global catering industry, customer satisfaction has become a critical indicator for evaluating firm competitiveness and long-term sustainability. In highly competitive restaurant markets, consumers' dining choices are increasingly influenced not only by food quality but also by pricing strategies, service environment, and marketing communication. As a result, restaurant brands are required to continuously optimize their marketing mix in order to respond to diversified and evolving customer expectations.

Haidilao Hot Pot is widely recognized as one of the most influential restaurant brands in China, characterized by its strong service orientation and differentiated customer experience. According to the Brand Finance Global Restaurant 2025 Report, Haidilao continues to maintain a strong brand value and market presence, reflecting its competitiveness within the global restaurant industry (Brand Finance, 2025). In recent years, the rapid expansion of internet-

famous restaurants and experiential dining has further intensified competition, making customer satisfaction a key determinant of brand survival and growth (Tang et al., 2023; Wu et al., 2025).

Existing studies have consistently demonstrated that marketing mix strategies play a significant role in shaping customer satisfaction in service and restaurant contexts. The traditional 4P marketing framework—Product, Price, Place, and Promotion—remains a widely applied analytical model in hospitality research. Empirical evidence suggests that effective product quality management, perceived price fairness, convenient location, and promotional activities are positively associated with customer satisfaction and behavioral outcomes (Gu, 2023; Raafigustina et al., 2025; Mohamed Ali & Khalil, 2024). Moreover, recent research highlights the need to adapt traditional marketing mix strategies to digital and customer-centric environments, particularly in service industries (Elfadel et al., 2024; Kotler et al., 2021).

Despite the growing body of literature on marketing mix and customer satisfaction, most existing studies focus on first-tier cities or national-level samples, while empirical evidence from developing second-tier cities remains limited. Differences in local consumption patterns, income levels, and market maturity may influence how customers perceive marketing mix elements and form satisfaction judgments (Ardani, 2021). Therefore, there is a clear need for localized empirical research that examines the effectiveness of marketing mix strategies in such contexts.

Against this background, this study aims to investigate customer satisfaction with Haidilao Hot Pot in Guiyang, China, using the 4P marketing theory as the analytical framework. By examining the effects of Product, Price, Place, and Promotion on customer satisfaction, this study seeks to provide empirical evidence on the applicability of the 4P model in a developing second-tier city and to offer practical insights for restaurant managers seeking to enhance customer satisfaction and brand competitiveness.

Literature Review

4Ps Marketing Strategies

The marketing mix framework (4Ps), consisting of Product, Price, Place, and Promotion, remains one of the most widely applied theoretical models for explaining customer satisfaction in the restaurant and hospitality industry. Recent studies confirm that well-designed marketing mix strategies significantly enhance customer satisfaction and post-consumption evaluations across different restaurant formats (Gu, 2023; Raafigustina et al., 2025). Moreover, globally competitive restaurant brands consistently rely on integrated marketing mix strategies to strengthen customer perceptions and brand value (Brand Finance, 2025). Beyond the marketing mix perspective, prior hospitality studies have also highlighted the roles of service quality, perceived value, and experiential factors in shaping customer satisfaction and related behavioral outcomes (Ali et al., 2021; Megahed & Abbas, 2021; Tuncer et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2024).

Product

Product-related attributes, including food quality, taste, menu variety, and innovation, are consistently identified as the most influential determinants of customer satisfaction in restaurant contexts. Empirical evidence shows that product innovation and superior food quality significantly enhance dining experiences and satisfaction levels (Manhas et al., 2024). Studies on internet-famous restaurants further indicate that distinctive and consistent product offerings are essential for sustaining customer satisfaction over time (Wu et al., 2025).

Price

Pricing strategies influence customer satisfaction through perceived fairness and value for money. In the Indian restaurant sector, D'Souza (2025) reported that perceived price fairness significantly affects customer satisfaction, which in turn influences loyalty behaviors.

This finding supports the theoretical assertion that customers evaluate price not only in absolute terms but relative to the quality and benefits received, making price a key marketing mix factor in shaping satisfaction outcomes.

Place

The place dimension, encompassing location convenience, accessibility, and dining environment, contributes meaningfully to customer satisfaction by shaping the overall consumption experience. Gu (2023) reports that convenient location and comfortable dining environments positively influence customer evaluations. Recent research further highlights that physical and social servicescapes enhance emotional responses and satisfaction in restaurant settings (Li et al., 2025).

Promotion

Promotion strategies shape customers’ pre-consumption expectations and post-consumption evaluations, thereby impacting satisfaction outcomes. Research on digital and traditional promotional tactics suggests that effective promotion enhances customer awareness and perceived value, which supports higher satisfaction ratings (Gu, 2023). Promotional communication that successfully aligns customer expectations with service delivery appears to strengthen consumers’ favorable satisfaction judgments within restaurant environments.

Research Framework and Hypotheses

Based on the 4P marketing theory and customer satisfaction theory, this study develops a conceptual framework in which Product, Price, Place, and Promotion are treated as independent variables, while customer satisfaction is the dependent variable. Prior studies have consistently demonstrated that marketing mix elements exert significant influence on customer satisfaction in the catering and service industries. Accordingly, this study focuses on examining the direct effects of the four marketing mix dimensions on customer satisfaction.

Based on the proposed research framework, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- H1: Product has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction.
- H2: Price has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction.
- H3: Place has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction.
- H4: Promotion has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction.

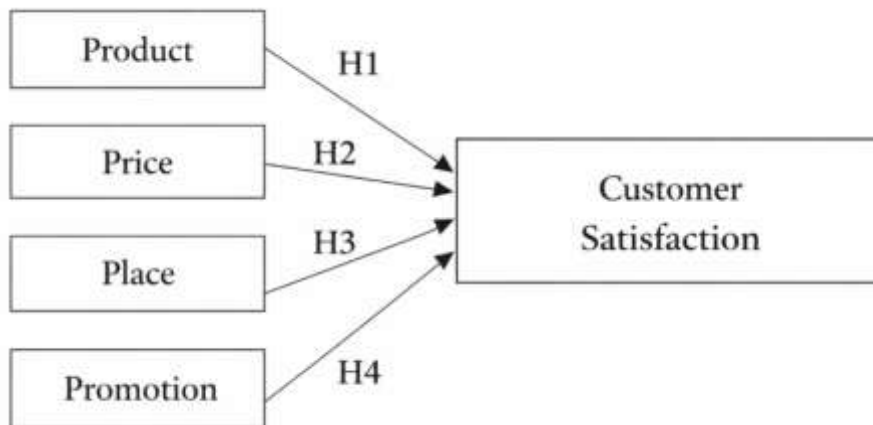


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research approach to investigate customer satisfaction with Haidilao Hot Pot in Guiyang, China, based on the 4P marketing theory. A structured questionnaire survey was used to collect primary data, and statistical analysis was conducted to examine the effects of marketing mix factors on customer satisfaction.

Population and Sample

The target population of this study consisted of customers who had previously dined at Haidilao Hot Pot restaurants in Guiyang. As the population size was large and its exact number

was unknown, the required sample size was determined using Cochran’s (1953) formula for an unknown population. With a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%, the minimum recommended sample size was calculated as 384 respondents.

To enhance the reliability and robustness of the empirical analysis, a total of 497 valid questionnaires were collected, exceeding the minimum sample size requirement. Respondents were selected using convenience sampling, and only those who confirmed prior dining experience at Haidilao in Guiyang were included in the final sample.

Research Instrument

The research instrument was a structured questionnaire developed based on the 4P marketing framework and customer satisfaction theory. The questionnaire comprised three sections: respondents’ demographic information, evaluations of the four marketing mix dimensions (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion), and overall customer satisfaction. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree/very dissatisfied) to 5 (strongly agree/very satisfied). Content validity was ensured through expert review, followed by a pilot test to assess reliability. Data were collected through online survey platforms, primarily via WeChat, during the period from December 2025 to February 2026.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize respondents’ demographic characteristics and evaluations of the 4Ps Marketing Strategies. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the effects of Product, Price, Place, and Promotion on customer satisfaction, with customer satisfaction as the dependent variable. Given the primary focus of this study on customer satisfaction, behavioral intention variables were not included in the final regression model and are suggested as directions for future research.

Results

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Table 1 Reliability Statistic

Cronbach’s Alpha	N of Hypotheses
0.944	4

As shown in Table 1, the overall Cronbach’s alpha coefficient is 0.944, which exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating very high reliability of the research instrument. This result confirms that the measurement items used to capture the four dimensions of the 4Ps Marketing Strategies demonstrate strong internal consistency and are suitable for subsequent statistical analysis.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std.Deviation
Product	497	3.320	0.995
Price	497	3.299	1.007
Place	497	3.309	1.008
Promotion	497	3.314	1.000

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the main study variables based on 497 valid responses. The mean scores of the four 4Ps Marketing Strategies dimensions range from 3.299 to 3.320, indicating a generally moderate-to-high level of customer evaluation.

Specifically, Product (M = 3.320, SD = 0.995) received the highest mean score, followed by Promotion (M = 3.314, SD = 1.000), Place (M = 3.309, SD = 1.008), and Price (M = 3.299, SD = 1.007). The relatively similar mean values suggest that customers' perceptions of Haidilao's marketing mix elements in Guiyang are fairly balanced, while the standard deviations indicate an acceptable degree of response dispersion. Overall, the results reflect a moderately positive evaluation of Haidilao's localized marketing practices.

Table 3 Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.853 ^a	0.728	0.726	0.559

^aPredictors: (Constant), H1, H2, H3, H4

The overall performance of the multiple regression model is presented in the model summary. The results indicate that the regression model demonstrates a strong explanatory power. Specifically, the correlation coefficient (R) is 0.853, suggesting a high degree of association between the independent variables (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion) and customer satisfaction. The coefficient of determination (R²) is 0.728, indicating that approximately 72.8% of the variance in customer satisfaction can be explained by the four dimensions of the 4Ps Marketing Strategies. After adjusting for the number of predictors, the adjusted R² remains high at 0.726, confirming the robustness and stability of the model. In addition, the standard error of the estimate is 0.559, implying an acceptable level of prediction accuracy. Overall, these results suggest that the proposed regression model fits the data well and that the 4Ps Marketing Strategies provides substantial explanatory power in predicting customer satisfaction with Haidilao Hot Pot in Guiyang.

Table 4 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardised B	Coefficient s Std. Error	Standardised	t	Sig.	Results
				Coefficients Beta			
1	Constant	0.049	0.093		0.528	0.598	
	H1	0.262	0.052	0.244	5.049	< 0.001	Accepted
	H2	0.286	0.051	0.269	5.594	< 0.001	Accepted
	H3	0.228	0.051	0.215	4.457	< 0.001	Accepted
	H4	0.206	0.046	0.193	4.449	< 0.001	Accepted

^a Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

Product and Customer Satisfaction

The regression results show that Product has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.244$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that food quality, taste, variety, and hygiene standards play a crucial role in shaping customers' overall satisfaction with Haidilao in Guiyang. Among the four marketing mix elements, product-related factors remain a fundamental driver of satisfaction in the catering industry.

Price and Customer Satisfaction

Price is found to exert a significant positive influence on customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.269$, $p < 0.001$). This result suggests that customers perceive Haidilao's pricing level as relatively reasonable and consistent with the quality of products and services provided. Price fairness and value for money are therefore important determinants of satisfaction in the Guiyang market.

Place and Customer Satisfaction

The analysis indicates that Place has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.215$, $p < 0.001$). Convenient location, accessibility, comfortable dining environment, and smooth service processes enhance customers' dining experiences and contribute positively to overall satisfaction.

Promotion and Customer Satisfaction

Promotion also demonstrates a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.193$, $p < 0.001$). Although its standardized coefficient is relatively smaller compared with other dimensions, promotional activities, membership programs, and online communication channels still play a meaningful role in enhancing customers' perceptions and satisfaction with the brand.

Discussion

Building on the empirical findings, this study further explains why Product and Price demonstrate relatively stronger effects on customer satisfaction in the context of a developing second-tier city.

First, Product emerged as the most influential determinant, which reinforces prior hospitality research emphasizing food quality as the core value driver in restaurant consumption (Manhas et al., 2024; Wu et al., 2025). However, in second-tier cities such as Guiyang, this effect may be amplified. Compared with first-tier metropolitan markets, where consumers may seek symbolic consumption or experiential novelty, customers in developing urban markets tend to prioritize functional value and quality reliability (Ardani, 2021; Nazarchuk et al., 2022). In such contexts, tangible attributes—such as ingredient freshness, taste consistency, and hygiene standards—serve as primary evaluation criteria. Therefore, Product exerts a stronger direct influence on satisfaction because it represents the most visible and measurable value component of the dining experience.

Second, Price demonstrates the strongest standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.269$), suggesting heightened sensitivity to perceived price fairness. This finding aligns with D'Souza (2025), who argues that perceived price fairness significantly shapes satisfaction through value-for-money assessments. In developing second-tier cities, disposable income levels and consumption structures may differ from first-tier markets, leading customers to engage in more rational and comparative evaluations of price–quality alignment (Ardani, 2021). Consequently, pricing strategies function not merely as revenue tools but as psychological signals of fairness and trust, thereby exerting a stronger effect on satisfaction formation.

In contrast, Place and Promotion exhibit comparatively weaker effects, though still significant. This suggests that environmental and promotional factors operate as supporting mechanisms rather than primary satisfaction drivers. While servicescape elements influence emotional responses (Li et al., 2025), and promotional activities enhance awareness and expectation alignment (Wonua et al., 2023; Ardisa et al., 2022), their impact appears contingent upon the fulfillment of core product and value expectations. In other words, experiential and communicative elements enhance satisfaction only after fundamental value propositions are secured.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings suggest that the relative effectiveness of marketing mix elements is context-dependent. In developing regional markets, tangible value

creation (Product and Price) may outweigh symbolic or experiential marketing stimuli. This extends existing literature by introducing a regional sensitivity perspective to 4Ps effectiveness (Okonkwo et al., 2023). Restaurant brands operating in emerging urban environments should therefore calibrate marketing resource allocation according to local economic maturity and consumer expectations.

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that the traditional 4Ps framework primarily emphasizes firm-controlled tactical variables and may not fully capture relational, experiential, or co-creation dimensions emphasized in contemporary services marketing theory (Kotler et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2024). While the 4Ps remain effective in explaining satisfaction in this offline dining context, integrating experiential marketing or service-dominant logic perspectives may provide a more comprehensive understanding of customer value formation in future research.

Conclusions

This study investigated customer satisfaction with Haidilao Hot Pot in Guiyang using the 4Ps Marketing Strategies framework. The results confirm that Product, Price, Place, and Promotion all exert significant positive effects on customer satisfaction, explaining 72.8% of variance. Consistent with prior research (Gu, 2023; Raafigustina et al., 2025), the 4Ps model demonstrates strong explanatory power in restaurant settings.

Among the four dimensions, Product and Price emerged as the most influential factors, highlighting the dominant role of tangible value creation and perceived price fairness in satisfaction formation (Manhas et al., 2024; D'Souza, 2025). The findings suggest that, in developing second-tier cities, customers prioritize functional benefits and value-for-money alignment over purely promotional stimuli.

Theoretically, this study reinforces the continued relevance of the traditional 4Ps framework in offline dining environments while recognizing its limitations in capturing experiential and relational dimensions (Kotler et al., 2021). Empirically, it contributes localized evidence from a second-tier city, extending prior research that has predominantly focused on first-tier markets (Ardani, 2021).

Overall, the study highlights the importance of context-sensitive marketing strategy design in enhancing restaurant customer satisfaction.

Suggestion

Managerial Implications

Based on the empirical findings, several practical implications can be proposed for restaurant managers operating in developing second-tier cities.

First, product quality should remain the core strategic priority. Since Product exerts the strongest influence on customer satisfaction, managers should continuously improve ingredient freshness, taste consistency, food safety standards, and menu innovation. Stable product performance is essential for sustaining customer trust and repeat patronage.

Second, pricing strategies should emphasize perceived fairness and value alignment. Given the strong effect of Price on satisfaction, managers should ensure that pricing structures reflect portion size, quality level, and service standards. Transparent pricing and reasonable value propositions are particularly important in markets where consumers demonstrate relatively higher price sensitivity.

Third, environmental and service process optimization should function as supporting strategies. Although Place has a comparatively weaker effect than Product and Price, improvements in dining comfort, accessibility, waiting-time management, and spatial layout can enhance the overall consumption experience and reinforce positive evaluations.

Fourth, promotional activities should be carefully aligned with actual service performance. Overemphasis on discounts or promotional campaigns without corresponding value delivery may weaken long-term satisfaction. Instead, promotional efforts should strengthen brand communication and reinforce existing value advantages.

Overall, restaurant managers in second-tier cities are advised to adopt a value-oriented marketing prioritization strategy, allocating more resources to product excellence and pricing optimization while using environmental and promotional strategies as complementary tools.

Academic and Future Research Implications

From a theoretical perspective, this study highlights the contextual sensitivity of marketing mix effectiveness. Future research may explore whether the relative importance of Product and Price varies across different city tiers, income levels, or cultural settings.

In addition, future studies could incorporate extended variables such as customer experience, emotional value, brand attachment, and behavioral intentions to build a more comprehensive explanatory model.

Longitudinal designs are also recommended to examine dynamic changes in customer satisfaction over time. Comparative studies across multiple cities or restaurant brands would further strengthen the generalizability of findings.

Finally, mixed-method approaches combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews may provide deeper insights into customer decision-making mechanisms in regional restaurant markets.

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