

A FRAMEWORK OF MARKETING STRATEGY FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM BUSINESS GROWTH IN UZBEKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the formulation of a marketing strategy framework specifically designed for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Uzbekistan. SMEs have several obstacles in establishing brand awareness, enticing clients, and optimizing financial profits in the current fiercely competitive business landscape. To surmount these challenges and maintain expansion, SMEs can utilize the extended marketing mix approach, which comprises the elements of product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence. This study employed a blend of descriptive and exploratory research methodologies, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data-gathering approaches. A survey was undertaken to assess the perspectives of entrepreneurs about the implementation of marketing mix strategies SMEs. Subsequently, interviews were performed with selected-experienced entrepreneurs in the service industry to analyze strengthen our data. The study examined the influence of the correlation between marketing mix variables on the development of SMEs through regression analysis with the help to STATA software. The results emphasized the significance of integrating marketing mix elements for SMEs to improve their marketing endeavors, foster brand loyalty, and get a competitive edge. This study enhances comprehension of marketing strategies for small and medium-sized firms in developing economies such as Uzbekistan and offers valuable insights for policymakers and entrepreneurs in promoting the expansion of SMEs in the economy.

Keywords: SMEs Growth, Marketing Mix, Strategy, Business Growth, Service Industry, Uzbekistan.

INTRODUCTION

SMEs constitute over 96% of the total number of firms in Asia and provide two-thirds of the private-sector employment in the region (Tadjibayeva, 2019). Hence, the Asian nation's economic prosperity relies on the implementation of comprehensive support measures for SMEs, as stated in a study by the Asian Development Bank (Tadjibayeva, 2019). Small firms play a significant role in the economy. They play a significant role in fostering job creation, promoting innovation, and driving economic growth, facilitating local community development, mitigating income disparity, enhancing resilience, and fostering regional development. Fostering and bolstering the expansion of small enterprises is vital for long-term and equitable economic progress. According to Azra & Salfiya (2019), these SMEs are considered essential and fundamental to the progress of both advanced and emerging countries. This is particularly crucial for emerging nations, where poverty and unemployment endure as significant challenges in their economies. Recognizing this reality, consecutive administrations in Uzbekistan have implemented a range of measures periodically to foster the growth of SMEs.

SMEs' growth is essential for the attainment of their long-term objectives. Entrepreneurial conduct and marketing strategies influence the development and expansion of SMEs (Ardjouman, 2015). Organizations are required to formulate approaches and marketing strategies (Dobbs & Hamilton, 2007). An organization or an individual's strategy refers to an intended strategy, method, technique, or blueprint that it employs to attain success in the marketplace or society at large. Achumba (2010) and Gleuck (2008), who identifies strategy as an all-encompassing, unitary, and unified plan that establishes a connection between the firm's competitive advantage and the environmental challenges it faces. Their studies suggested that to enhance marketing effectiveness and efficacy, organizations must acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and refine a successful marketing plan.

On a global scale, marketing strategy has evolved into a vital instrument for businesses to maintain a competitive edge in their respective markets and to grow. A crucial requirement for an industry to enhance its market share and mitigate the effects of competition is the implementation of a sound marketing strategy (Adewale & Oyewale, 2013). They defined marketing strategy as a method of implementing marketing mix; delivering high-quality products that meet the demands of customers while also ensuring an affordable price point, expanding distribution channels, and implementing an effective promotion strategy.

However, the existing literature on marketing strategies for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Uzbekistan is notably sparse when it comes to a comprehensive exploration of the 7Ps framework (Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence). While general marketing strategies are discussed, there is a noticeable research gap in understanding how these specific elements of the marketing mix contribute to SME growth in the unique socio-economic and cultural context of Uzbekistan. The intricate dynamics and interplay of the 7Ps, particularly tailored to the Uzbek market, have not been adequately addressed. This research aims to address this gap by providing an in-depth analysis of how the 7Ps framework can be strategically applied to enhance SME growth in Uzbekistan, considering the nuanced factors influencing the business environment in the region.

Hence, the aim of this study is to bridge the existing research gap in the literature on marketing strategies for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Uzbekistan by conducting a comprehensive exploration of the 7Ps framework (Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence). While general marketing strategies are acknowledged, the specific dynamics of how these elements contribute to SME growth within the distinctive socio-economic and cultural context of Uzbekistan remain insufficiently examined. This research seeks to fill this void by intricately analyzing the interplay of the 7Ps, uniquely tailored to the Uzbek market. The overarching objective is to provide a detailed and context-specific understanding of how the 7Ps framework can be strategically applied, offering insights that will contribute to the enhancement of SME growth in Uzbekistan, taking into account the nuanced factors shaping the business environment in the region.

The implications of this study extend beyond academic contributions, offering practical insights for marketers, business owners, and policymakers. By elucidating the strategic application of the 7Ps framework in the context of Uzbekistan's SMEs, this research equips practitioners with actionable knowledge to enhance their marketing strategies, fostering sustainable growth. Additionally, policymakers can leverage these findings to formulate targeted initiatives supporting SMEs and promoting economic development. The study's implications thus resonate with the broader objective of facilitating informed decision-making and advancing the

effectiveness of marketing practices in both the Uzbekistan context and analogous developing economies. In Uzbekistan, for the advancement of this industry, nascent business owners must be well-informed regarding these problems, obstacles, and strategic alternatives.

Theoretical Background

Contribution of SME's in Global World

SMBs constitute the majority of enterprises on a global scale and play a crucial role in fostering employment opportunities and advancing the global economy. Globally, they comprise over 50% of employment and approximately 90% of enterprises (World Bank, 2017). The contribution of SMEs to the economic expansion of any nation is substantial. For instance, despite the attention being directed towards the largest corporations in the country, the U.S. Small Business Administration asserts that the overwhelming majority of enterprises operate within the country as small businesses. Indeed, an extraordinary 33.2 million small enterprises (nearly 99 percent) exist throughout the United States (Main K, 2023).

The role of SMEs in modern economies is crucial, and their contribution to economic progress is widely acknowledged. The recognition of the social and economic functions of SMEs has resulted in the identification of the SME sector as a crucial component of the economy (Avasilicai, 2009). The G20's objective of achieving 2% growth by 2018 will only be realized if governments are committed to promoting private sector-led growth and entrepreneurship. Economic policies that bolster the competitiveness of economies to promote robust, sustainable, and equitable growth. Such regulations are crucial for organizations of all sizes, especially for the numerous small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operating in global markets. Participating in global value chains is crucial for promoting international commerce and investment and enhancing productivity and innovation capabilities (BIAC, 2016).

Nair (2012) asserts that small enterprises play a crucial role in effectively reducing poverty. It improves job prospects in many emerging economies. A significant number of academics have discovered that most small-scale firms have generated job prospects and opportunities for self-employment. Small firms have a crucial role in promoting economic growth, rural economic activity, poverty reduction, and social justice. Modest and medium enterprises (SMEs) are defined as businesses with a limited number of workers and operate on a modest scale. A multitude of experts have discovered that small businesses have bolstered the country's gross domestic product (GDP) rate, with Small and Medium Enterprises making a significant contribution to the GDP. Small enterprises play a crucial role in fostering national economic progress. Furthermore, it offers employment prospects for individuals who are now jobless in the growing economy (Jasra, 2011).

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a crucial role in driving Asia's economic and social progress. They contribute to employment, entrepreneurship, innovation, economic growth, poverty reduction, cultural preservation, and sustainable development. Facilitating and encouraging the development of small enterprises is essential for promoting inclusive and robust economies in Asia (Tadjibayeva, 2019). For instance, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are playing a substantial part in the economic advancement of Pakistan, as highlighted by Syed et al. (2012). UNIDO data reveals that the SME sector comprises 90 per cent of enterprises globally and accounts for over 60 per cent of global employment (Khan et al., 2013). Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are crucial contributors to economies and are seen

as the foundation of economic growth in both emerging and developed countries. Pakistan's economy, like other developing nations, relies heavily on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Khalique et al., 2011c).

Small businesses in Uzbekistan have a critical role in stimulating economic growth and boosting the country's GDP. They also serve as a key solution to pressing social issues like unemployment and poverty, particularly among women and young people. Seven The contribution of SMEs to the country's GDP increased from 38.2% in 2005 to 54.9% in 2017. According to Magendzo A (2022), they provide more than 80% of the total employment, over 50% of the added value to the economy, and a substantial rise in total investments. These factors serve as indicators of innovation activity. In Uzbekistan, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a crucial role in maintaining a robust and expanding economy. However, these SMEs encounter several obstacles that need proactive government action to enhance the business climate and streamline their operations. When considering entrepreneurship in Uzbekistan, it is important to focus on four key policy areas: 1) tax policy, 2) regulation, 3) access to financial markets, and 4) legal protection, property rights, and economic freedom (Magendzo A, 2022).

Marketing Strategy

Marketing in small firms is focused primarily on short-term objectives, with limited emphasis placed on long-term plans, strategies, and analysis. This is in contrast to the formal, well-organized, and structured approach to marketing observed in large corporations. Companies that allocate more resources towards advertising experience positive cash flows in the following years (Chan, 2001). SMEs frequently design individual advertisements in isolation and are less likely to develop a unified, well-planned advertising campaign (UK Advertising Associate, 2013). It has been noted by Dutta (2009) and Vorhies and Morgan (2005) that the financial performance of an organization is impacted subsequently by its marketing capability. Furthermore, Kochhar and David (1996) posit that investors form judgments regarding an organization on the grounds of its marketing capabilities, performance, and strategies.

Within the realm of marketing concepts, services encompass an extensive array of endeavors, professions, and activities. Kotler defines a service as follows: "A service is any event, activity, or benefit that one party can provide to the other that is primarily intangible and does not result in the acquisition of any tangible goods or services." The correlation between the provision of services and the tangible product is debatable (Kotler, 2012).

To ensure efficient marketing strategy in a small service-oriented organization located in Uzbekistan, the manager must formulate three strategies that target the aforementioned three connections (Ziyayeva M, 2018).

- The "consumer-organization" bond is the focus of traditional marketing strategy, which is concerned with pricing, communications, and distribution channel concerns.
- Staff motivation is associated with the "organization-personnel" relation that is the focus of the internal marketing strategy.
- The approach of interactive marketing—centered on the connection between "personnel" and "consumer"—is linked to the assurance of service quality.

Marketing Mix Strategy (P.Kotler's Framework)

As stated by Lee and Kotler (2011), the marketing mix comprises the firm's ability to exert an impact on the reaction of the customers through the use of controllable variables. In this context, the controllable variables are denoted by the four "P's": product, price, place (distribution), and promotion. Every organization makes an effort to assemble a set of four "P" elements that will simultaneously generate the highest level of customer satisfaction and accomplish its organizational goals. Furthermore, Moor and Maidenhead (2009) define the marketing mix as follows: "The marketing mix refers to the assortment of strategies implemented by an organization to successfully market its offerings to a specific demographic to accomplish its goals." It is additionally known as the "7 Ps" (Product, Place, Promotion, and Price), which comprises the 4 Ps plus People, Process, and Physical Evidence. These four or seven "P" components, which are also known as marketing elements, comprise the marketing mix. Because a decision in one area influences outcomes in others, they are all interconnected.

Based on the above definition, it becomes evident that the marketing mix in Uzbekistan primarily entails the identification of consumers' needs and the provision of diverse services to fulfill those needs. Thus, proprietors of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) must manufacture or produce goods according to consumer demands, ensure that they are priced affordably and in a manner that is convenient for consumers to access, distribute the product through various channels that consumers can access conveniently, and educate consumers about the product's attributes via the media at their disposal (Moor and Maidenhead, 2009).

By implementing the marketing mix, small enterprises can strategically position their services within the Uzbek market.

The Variables of Marketing Mix Strategy

Product- As defined by Kotler (2013), a product is any item that can be made available to a market to attract attention, attract purchases, facilitate usage, or satisfy needs and desires. Additionally, they define a consumer product as something that is purchased for individual use by the final consumer. Consumers frequently make purchases, employing strategic planning and brand comparisons to evaluate attributes such as price, quality, and style. Mohammad (2012) further asserts that the product encompasses its packaging, labeling, and tangible appearance. Information may also impact whether or not consumers scrutinize, observe, and purchase a product in-store.

SMEs in Uzbekistan may establish a distinct brand identity using a combination of product attributes, quality, design, and packaging, which helps to differentiate them from their competitors. A favorable brand perception and increased consumer loyalty may ensue in the Uzbek market.

H1: The product attributes significantly influence the establishment of SMEs in the service industry.

Price- Kotler (2007) defined price as the expenditure incurred by an organization to manufacture, distribute, and advertise the product that is to be exchanged.

According to Zeithaml (1988), monetary cost is a determinant of how consumers perceive the value of a product. Price can be defined as the tangible or comprehensive rated worth of a product that is being exchanged; an investigation conducted by Owomoyela (2013) establishes a noteworthy correlation between price and company success. The pricing strategy you implement for your service or product has a substantial impact on its marketability.

By utilizing the marketing mix, one can implement effective pricing strategies in Uzbekistan, taking into consideration variables such as consumer purchasing power, competition, and market demand. Uzbek SMEs can maximize profits and attract consumers by establishing prices that are perceived as reasonable and provide value for money.

H2: The price of providing service has a positive relationship with SME establishment.

Promotion- Promoting a product involves devising an effective combination of communication strategies to convey the product's brand and message from the manufacturer to the customer. Small enterprises that comprehend the integration of promotions into their overall marketing strategy acknowledge the significance of this. Integrated marketing is the coordinated linking of advertising, public relations, direct marketing, and other marketing strategies.

Similarly, Gbolagade (2013) defines promotion as a targeted initiative aimed at motivating consumers to share information about their sundries with others.

The positive impact of advertising on the development of a positive brand image has been substantiated by numerous scholars and practitioners, including Martin (1989), Aaker (1991), and (1996).

The marketing mix provides a framework for creating successful promotional campaigns in Uzbekistan. Through the strategic implementation of digital marketing, public relations, advertising, and sales promotions, organizations have the ability to generate interest, create awareness, and stimulate demand for their offerings. It may result in increased consumer engagement and brand visibility.

H3: The marketing mix element of promotion significantly impacts the growth and success of SMEs in the service industry.

Place- According to Jones (2007), "place" encompasses any means by which a consumer can acquire a product or service. Additionally, Bowersox and Closs (1996) refer to distribution as "place." As per their assertion, it constitutes the other component of the marketing mix and comprises all strategies and instruments associated with the provision of products and services to consumers. Place or distribution is defined by Kotler and Armstrong (2006) as a collection of interdependent organizations that collaborate to ensure that a product is accessible to consumers for use or consumption.

Successful distribution of products through marketing channels, including wholesalers and retailers, is the essence of place strategy (Berman, 1996).

In Uzbekistan, the marketing mix assists small companies in optimizing their distribution channels. SMEs can increase consumer contentment and convenience by determining the optimal channels through which to reach their target market and by ensuring proficient product availability and delivery. It may lead to enhanced customer loyalty and increased sales.

H4: The place of service has a positive influence on SME's growth.

People - According to Muala and Qurneh (2012), pertains to the personnel responsible for both the provision and execution of the service. Constantly incorporating personal interactions between clients and site personnel, numerous services have an impact on purchasers' evaluations of service quality. Personnel are essential to the provision of consumer service.

Individuals residing in Uzbekistan hold a pivotal position in the realm of marketing due to their direct consumer interaction and provision of the brand experience. They are frequently regarded as the most valuable and influential element of the marketing blend in the Uzbek market due to their ability to substantially affect consumer satisfaction, brand perception, and overall business success.

H5: The marketing mix element of people, referring to the employees or service providers within SMEs, is a critical factor in the service industry.

Process –The process is generally defined by Muala and Qurneh (2012) as the execution of an action and function that increases the value of goods at a low cost and to the customer's great advantage; it is more crucial for services than for products. The level of transparency regarding the service providers' proficiency and the rate at which the process is completed are both aspects that significantly influence the customer's contentment with the purchase. Consequently, process management guarantees quality consistency and availability. Due to the concurrent consumption and production of process management, it is exceedingly challenging to balance service demand and supply. The development and distribution of a product are significantly influenced by the design and execution of its components.

In Uzbekistan, the process is a vital component of the marketing mix, as it facilitates the delivery of value to consumers, the improvement of operational efficiency, the establishment of brand image, the encouragement of innovation, and the measurement and evaluation of marketing efforts. SMEs can achieve sustained business success and a competitive edge in the Uzbek market by emphasizing the process component.

H6: The process has a significant impact on the performance of SMEs in the service industry.

Physical Evidence - According to Muala and Qurneh (2012), pertains to the setting in which the service and any tangible products that aid in its communication and execution are provided. This aspect is of significant significance as it is customary for customers to evaluate the caliber of service rendered based on tangible evidence. Furthermore, this factor pertains to the surroundings in which the provision of services takes place.

Physical evidence should be a considerable consideration for Uzbekistan-based businesses when formulating their marketing mix strategies. Through strategic investments in the physical components of their products or services, enterprises can establish a positive brand reputation, foster customer confidence, and ultimately stimulate sales and expansion within the Uzbek market.

H7: The physical evidence significantly influences the establishment of SMEs in the service industry.

Conceptual framework and hypotheses development

The proposed conceptual framework proposes to examine SME marketing mix strategy development in a structured approach. As shown in Figure 1, the variables of the marketing mix strategy that impact SME formation are presented. Thus, Figure 1 presents the network and visual representations of the proposed constructs.

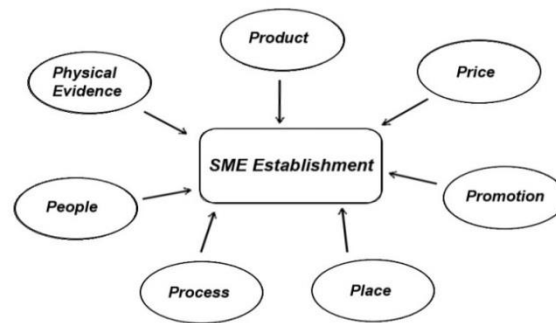


Figure 1
MARKETING MIX STRATEGY (7PS OF KOTLER) VARIABLES IMPACT ON SMES ESTABLISHMENT

METHODOLOGY

Research Method and Design

This study employed a combination of descriptive and exploratory research methodologies, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data-gathering approaches. The research adopted a more exploratory and descriptive approach due to the lack of prior investigation on the chosen topic and the recent emergence of a framework for marketing strategy for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) establishments in Uzbekistan. Two primary phases comprised the research design: surveys and interviews. The purpose of the survey was to gather insights from entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan concerning the execution of marketing mix strategies within SMEs. Interviews were conducted with service industry entrepreneurs to conduct a more comprehensive analysis of the collected data.

Data Collection tool

a) Survey: To collect quantitative data, a survey questionnaire was designed. Concerning the execution of marketing mix strategies within small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the survey inquired about the following aspects: product, price, site, promotion, personnel, process, and tangible evidence. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select a sample of entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan from which the survey was subsequently disseminated.

The participants were requested to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with a range of statements by employing Likert scale ratings.

b) Interviews: Qualitative data was collected through interviews with service industry entrepreneurs. The interviews were aimed at gathering entrepreneurs' experiences and viewpoints on the implementation of marketing mix strategies in SMEs. Participants were asked open-ended questions so that they could share thorough thoughts and explanations.

Data Analytical techniques

a) Analysis of Survey Data: Statistical software, specifically STATA regression analysis, was employed to examine the survey data. Analyses were conducted on the correlation between marketing mix variables and the growth of SMEs. Utilizing statistical analysis, the importance of integrating marketing mix components for SME marketing efforts to cultivate brand loyalty, improve performance, and obtain a competitive advantage was determined.

b) Interview Data: Following transcription, the interview data was subjected to a thematic analysis. The entrepreneurs' responses underwent a coding and categorization process to identify overarching themes and sub-themes. As a result of this qualitative analysis, the perspectives, and experiences of entrepreneurs about marketing strategies for SMEs were better comprehended.

Ethical Considerations

Increasingly, ethical considerations influenced each stage of the research procedure. Participants' informed consent was obtained before the commencement of the survey and interviews. To guarantee confidentiality and anonymity, any personally identifiable information was eliminated from the data. The study adhered to ethical principles and safeguarded the confidentiality and rights of the participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis

The summary of respondents' socio-demographic profile data is presented. This table illustrates the age distribution of the 100 participants in this survey. Overall, 50% of the participants fell within the age range of 30 to 40 years, 37% were between the ages of 20 and 30, and 13% were aged 40 years or older.

Moreover, it is worth noting that among the entire sample, 57% of the respondents possessed a Bachelor's degree, 8% held a secondary degree, 7% held a PhD, and 28% had a Master's degree. Moreover, according to, 98% of the participants had acquired market research experience during their business careers in the service industry.

It further depicts data on the employment status of respondents in enterprises of medium, small, and micro sizes in the service industry. It has been shown that nearly all types of firms have obtained market research. Out of the participants, 8 percent are employed as executive staff, 62 are managers, and 30 have roles as Owners and CEOs. In addition, the study identified 24 participants from medium-sized enterprises, 16 from micro-sized organizations, and 60 from small companies.

Analysis of research objective I

The principal aim of objective 1 is to analyze the key components comprising a marketing mix strategy that applies to the formation of companies in Uzbekistan. Participants were instructed to assess the seven marketing mix strategies, namely product, price, promotion, place, process, people, and physical evidence, as elucidated in the literature review. These 7P indicators were analyzed together to define the relationship between them towards SMEs growth. The data presented in Table 1 indicates that the variables with the highest mean scores were product and process, a value of 4.84 and 4.83, respectively. Conversely, the physical evidence of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Uzbekistan was identified as the second most relevant variable, with a mean value of 4.81.

Furthermore, the reliability of the 7P's of the marketing mix strategy employed in the dissertation was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha test, as illustrated in Table 1. As a result, the average alpha score of the independent variables was determined to be 0.82. This value indicates that the variables used in examining the model are reasonably reliable on average. Moreover, according to Kline (1999), Yang & Green (2011), Cronbach's alpha coefficients typically fall within the range of 0 to 1, where higher values signify enhanced internal consistency or reliability. The acceptable score for the Cronbach's Alpha test is typically between 0.7 and 0.8

It can be inferred that the marketing mix variables exhibit moderate to high degrees of internal consistency, as indicated by the coefficients which span from 0.7652 to 0.8650. Based on these coefficients, it can be determined that the items comprising each variable are reasonably reliable in measuring the same underlying construct.

Variables of Marketing Mix	Mean values	Reliability Coefficient (Cronbach Alpha)
Product	4.83	0.8524
Price	4.8	0.8212
Place	4.68	0.7652
Promotion	4.8	0.8266
Physical evidence	4.81	0.845
People	4.8	0.8241
Process	4.84	0.865
SME growth	4.83	0.8969
Total Average (Reliability):		0.8200

A regression analysis using the STATA software was conducted to determine the influence of the independent variables (7Ps of Marketing mix strategy) on the dependent variable (SME growth) and to quantify the extent to which changes in one variable can affect changes in another. Regression analysis is a statistical method used to determine the connection between the dependent and independent variables. It facilitates comprehension of how alterations in the independent variables (7Ps) impact the dependent variable (SME growth) and the characteristics and direction of that correlation. Table 2 shows the indices of model fit.

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs = 103
				F(7, 95) = 23.39
Model	97.0969819	7	13.8709974	Prob > F = 0.0000
Residual	56.3399113	95	.593051698	R-squared = 0.6328
Total	153.436893	102	1.50428327	Adj R-squared = 0.6058
				Root MSE = .7701

Consequently, it has been demonstrated that there is a statistically significant relationship between independent variables (physical evidence, people, and process) and the establishment of SMEs in Uzbekistan. This conclusion is supported by the fact that the P-values for these variables (0.052, 0.014, and 0.008) are all less than the significance level of 0.05, as shown in Table 3. Moreover, it is statistically essential to claim that other independent variables (product, price, place, and promotion) that were defined the explanatory variables do not affect the dependent variable due to a high p -value exceeding the significant level at ($p < 0.05$).

Hypothesis	Coef.	Std. Err.	t-values	P-values	Decision
			($t > 1.96$)	(< 0.05)	
H1: The product attributes significantly influence the establishment of SMEs in the service industry	0.177	0.109	1.63	0.107	Rejected
H2: The price of providing service has a positive relationship with SME establishment.	0.226	0.133	1.712	0.091	Rejected
H3: The marketing mix element of promotion significantly impacts the growth and success of SMEs in the service industry.	0.15	0.112	1.34	0.185	Rejected
H4: The place of providing service has a positive relationship with SME establishment.	0.099	0.743	1.33	0.188	Rejected
H5: The marketing mix element of people, referring to the employees or service providers within SMEs, is a critical factor in the service industry.	-0.347	0.176	-1.971	0.052	Accepted
H6: The process has a significant impact on the performance of SMEs in the service industry.	0.363	0.146	2.49	0.014	Accepted
H7: The physical evidence significantly influences the establishment of SMEs in the service industry.	0.493	0.181	2.73	0.008	Accepted

Analysis from interview – Research objective 2

The main aim of objective 2 is to explore the advantages and prospects of adopting a "Marketing Mix strategy" for small and medium firms and startups in Uzbekistan.

Case 1- La Esmeralda in Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan possesses a thriving café culture, especially in its capital city, Tashkent, as well as in other prominent towns such as Samarkand and Bukhara. La Esmeralda is a restaurant with two locations in Tashkent and Samarqand. According to Mr. X, a manager at this restaurant, La Esmeralda produced important and captivating material to attract and educate the intended audience. This encompassed blog entries that offer valuable insights about the products or services offered by the organization. By positioning the firm as a reliable and authoritative source of information, it may cultivate credibility and allure potential clients. La Esmeralda prioritizes fostering robust client connections via the implementation of efficient customer service procedures and loyalty programmers. This strategy aids in maintaining current clients and generating favorable word-of-mouth recommendations. Mr X stated that La Esmeralda considered many elements while devising a marketing plan for a firm in Uzbekistan, aiming to achieve congruence with the business's aims and objectives:

a) Business Objectives: La Esmeralda establishes a close partnership with the organization to ascertain its immediate and long-term goals regarding customer acquisition, revenue expansion, market dominance, brand positioning, or any other particular targets.

b) Target Market: Market research was conducted by La Esmeralda to determine the target market in Uzbekistan. It is imperative to have a comprehensive understanding of the target audience's demographics, preferences, behaviors, and requirements to develop an effective marketing strategy.

Mr X stated that small and medium-sized businesses can identify prospective consumers and gaining an understanding of their preferences and requirements through the following techniques: La Esmeralda Restaurant can collect consumer feedback and insights by monitoring social media platforms and online reviews. Additionally, La Esmeralda Restaurant can assess the target market, marketing tactics, and product offerings of its rivals.

Social media platforms are heavily incorporated into the marketing strategies of Uzbekistan's minor and medium-sized enterprises. It permits enterprises to expand their consumer base, interact with patrons, and increase brand recognition. Regular posting and consumer engagement on social media platforms enable La Esmeralda Restaurant to capitalize on these channels see table 4.

The marketing mix strategy for small and medium-sized enterprises in the service sector is delineated by La Esmeralda Restaurant, taking into account the subsequent components:

Table 4 THE MARKETING MIX STRATEGY FOR LA ESMERALDA
Product: La Esmeralda Restaurant prioritizes the creation of a cuisine that specifically responds to the interests and requirements of its target clientele. This entails the creation of a wide variety of culinary preparations, considering certain dietary limitations, and guaranteeing the use of top-notch components
Price: La Esmeralda Restaurant establishes pricing strategies that are in line with the target market's expectations and perceived value. This may entail employing competitive price strategies, providing distinctive value propositions, or executing pricing promotions within certain timeframes.
Place: La Esmeralda Restaurant strategically chooses the location of its restaurant to provide easy access and high exposure for its target clientele. Factors like as foot traffic, parking availability, and proximity to related companies are taken into consideration
Promotion: La Esmeralda Restaurant utilizes many promotional strategies to raise awareness and stimulate interest in its services. These can encompass advertising campaigns, social media marketing, public relations initiatives, and

partnerships with local companies or influencers.

People: La Esmeralda Restaurant acknowledges the significance of a highly skilled and customer-focused workforce. Their primary emphasis is on recruiting and instructing staff members who possess the ability to deliver exceptional service, interact well with patrons, and cultivate a favorable eating ambience.

Process: La Esmeralda Restaurant diligently focuses on the whole procedure of providing its services, to establish a smooth and pleasurable experience for its consumers. This includes the optimization of order acquisition, meal assembly, table attendance, and payment procedures.

Physical evidence: La Esmeralda Restaurant places great emphasis on the physical evidence, including the whole setting and ambience of its facility. These characteristics encompass elements like as interior design, lighting, cleanliness, and general mood, all of which influence the customer's opinion of the eating experience.

Tactical strategy and recommendation by La Esmeralda Restaurant

Mr. X (the owner of La Esmeralda Restaurant) stated that the key elements of the marketing mix plan that La Esmeralda Restaurant suggests for small and medium-sized enterprises in the service industry are:

Service differentiation:

La Esmeralda Restaurant recommends that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) distinguish themselves by providing distinctive attributes or experiences that distinguish them from their competition. Examples of such enhancements may encompass tailored menu selections, individualized client assistance, or immersive dining encounters.

Targeted promotions:

La Esmeralda Restaurant advises small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to identify their unique target market and customize their promotional strategies to effectively reach and connect with that particular audience. This might entail utilizing various social media channels, implementing local advertising strategies, or engaging in partnerships with influencers or local enterprises to enhance brand recognition.

Customer relationship management:

La Esmeralda Restaurant prioritizes the establishment of robust client relationships. SMEs may boost customer happiness and loyalty by implementing loyalty programs, gathering consumer feedback, and engaging in personalized communication.

Staff training and development:

La Esmeralda Restaurant emphasizes the importance of highly skilled staff in providing exceptional service via staff training and development. SMEs have to allocate resources towards training initiatives to guarantee that their staff has the requisite expertise and knowledge to satisfy client expectations and deliver a satisfactory service encounter.

Continuous improvement:

La Esmeralda Restaurant recommends that SMEs engage in ongoing evaluation and enhancement of their services, drawing from client input and market trends. This encompasses

the process of closely observing consumer satisfaction, assessing rivals, and adjusting their products or services to cater to the changing demands of customers

Online presence and reputation management:

La Esmeralda Restaurant advises small and SMEs to develop a robust online presence by creating a website and utilizing social media platforms. Effectively overseeing online reviews and promptly addressing consumer comments is essential for upholding a favorable business image.

Customer segmentation:

Consumer segmentation involves the identification of distinct consumer categories within the target market of La Esmeralda, and the evaluation of their level of price sensitivity. They provide several pricing alternatives or bundles to accommodate different consumer categories, depending on their perceived value and readiness to spend.

By implementing a marketing mix plan for La Esmeralda Cafe in Uzbekistan, the company distinguishes itself, allures customers, boosts sales, and cultivates sustained expansion. Continuous monitoring of market changes, customer behavior, and rivals is crucial to maintain the relevance and effectiveness of the marketing mix.

Case 2- Korall Italian Laundry service in Uzbekistan

Korall Italian Laundry Service has operated as a service firm since 2016. Mr. Y, the proprietor of Korall Laundry Service, effectively executed a marketing plan for a small and medium-sized business in Uzbekistan. This was achieved by a concentrated approach to advertising and emphasizing the unique value proposition. Korall Laundry Service has classified its target demographic as small and medium-sized enterprises, specifically hotels, restaurants, and spas. He devised advertising strategies especially customised to target these firms using channels that were most likely to yield results, such as local business directories, industry-specific magazines, and internet platforms. In addition, Korall Laundry Service established a compelling value proposition that set them apart from their rivals. He highlighted their prompt delivery time, top-notch cleaning services, and affordable cost.

The parameters used by Korall Laundry Service while developing a marketing plan in Uzbekistan, as specified by the company:

a) Market Research: Korall Laundry Service undertook comprehensive market research to get insights into the dynamics of the target market, client preferences, and the competitive landscape.

b) Pricing strategy: Korall Laundry Service meticulously devised its pricing plan by considering the prevailing local market conditions, competitive pricing, and target client categories. His objective was to provide pricing that was both competitive and profitable while also delivering value to customers.

According to Mr. Y, the market research carried out by Korall Laundry Service for small and medium enterprises in Uzbekistan, to determine target clients and comprehend their requirements and preferences, generally encompasses the following procedures:

- Surveys and Interviews: Korall Laundry Service prepares and executes surveys or conducts interviews with small and medium-sized organizations.
- Competitor Analysis: Korall Laundry Service performs a comprehensive assessment of rivals in the market. Through a comprehensive assessment of their advantages and disadvantages, Korall Laundry Service can pinpoint areas of opportunity in the market and formulate tactics to set themselves apart from competitors.

Conversely, Korall Laundry Service utilizes social media tools to enhance interaction and promote brand recognition. Korall Laundry Service produces superior and captivating articles about laundry advice, market patterns, and client endorsements. According to Mr Y, they customize the material to connect with their intended audience, demonstrating their knowledge and establishing credibility with potential clients. In addition, Korall Laundry Service determines the social media channels that are highly favored by their target clientele. Korall Laundry Service employs social media channels to advertise exclusive promotions, reduced prices, or customer loyalty initiatives table 5. They produce aesthetically pleasing visuals or movies that captivate their audience and motivate them to act. According to Mr. Y, the marketing mix strategy for small and medium firms in the service industry, as defined by Korall Laundry Service, often consists of the following elements:

Table 5 THE MARKETING MIX STRATEGY FOR KORALL LAUNDRY SERVICE
Product: Korall Laundry Service offers a diverse range of laundry services, including delivery options, dry cleaning, ironing, and stains removal. They guarantee that their services are customized to satisfy the particular requirements of their target clientele, dependable and of superior quality.
Price: The pricing strategy is determined by various factors, including the cost of delivering the services, the pricing strategies of competitors and the perception of value by customers. Profitably establishing competitive and appealing prices that correspond to the quality of service rendered by Korall Laundry Service.
Place: This comprises the physical locations, online platforms, and delivery alternatives of Korall Laundry Service. They ensure that their target consumers have easy access to their services.
Promotion: Promotion encompasses endeavors that are designed to generate demand for the services and increase their visibility. Korall Laundry Service employs a diverse range of promotional channels to convey its offerings and value proposition to the intended audience, including social media, online advertising, referral programs, and partnerships.
People: The human resources component of the marketing mix strategy emphasizes customer-facing personnel, including employees and customer service representatives.
Process: Korall Laundry Service guarantees efficient procedures for the collection, cleansing, and timely delivery of laundry items while upholding quality standards at every stage.

Tactical strategy and recommendation by Korall Laundry Service

The key elements of the marketing mix strategy advocated by Korall Laundry Service for small and medium-sized enterprises in the service sector, as stated by Mr. Y, are as follows:

a) Service Differentiation:

It is recommended that SMEs identify distinctive selling points or differentiating factors that distinguish their services from those of their competitors (Korall Laundry Service).

b) Pricing Strategy:

SME pricing strategies must strike a balance between customer affordability and business profitability. To determine the most advantageous pricing levels, Korall Laundry Service advises performing an exhaustive analysis of costs, competitor pricing, and customer value perception.

c) Promotional Activities:

To enhance brand recognition and entice clientele, Korall Laundry Service advises the adoption of a diverse range of promotional activities. Online advertising, content creation, social media marketing, referral programs, and partnerships with complementary businesses are some of these strategies.

d) Customer Experience:

SMEs are encouraged by Korall Laundry Service to prioritize providing a favorable customer experience at each interaction, encompassing the initial inquiry, service provision, and subsequent follow-up.

Korall Italian Laundry Service must maintain a competitive edge by consistently monitoring market trends, consumer preferences, and competition to ascertain the continued relevance and efficacy of its marketing mix strategy. Consistently collecting customer feedback and adjusting the marketing blend in response can contribute to the sustenance of customers and the advancement of the business.

Case 3- Olmos Travel Agency in Uzbekistan

As per manager Ms Z, the Olmos Travel agency commenced operations in 2023 and has already executed a prosperous marketing strategy through the utilization of targeted advertising. The business's target market was designated by the Olmos Travel agency as business travelers or adventure-seeking visitors. Following this, they developed customized advertisements and promotional materials that effectively appealed to the target audience while emphasizing the distinctive value proposition of the business. Olmos Travel agency actively promoted the act of contented clients providing favorable feedback and testimonials regarding the company's offerings. By utilizing these evaluations on the organization's website and social media channels, they established credibility and trust with prospective clients.

She emphasized that the Olmos Travel agency considers the following factors when devising a marketing strategy for a business in Uzbekistan to ensure that it is consistent with the organization's aims and objectives. The Olmos Travel agency undertakes an extensive examination of the competitive environment within the Uzbekistan travel sector. This includes the identification of competitors, the comprehension of their strengths and shortcomings, and the identification of opportunities to distinguish the company from its rivals. Furthermore, the marketing strategy is harmonized by the Olmos Travel agency with the particular aims and objectives of the organization. The marketing strategy is strategically developed to facilitate the achievement of these objectives, which may include augmenting brand recognition, increasing sales, or expanding market share.

Ms. Z stated that the Olmos Travel agency conducts market research for small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) to identify prospective customers and gain an understanding of their preferences and requirements via the following techniques:

Data Analysis:

The Olmos Travel agency analyses market trends, consumer behavior, and the competitive landscape utilizing both primary and secondary data sources. They utilize tools and methodologies of market research to derive significant insights from the data at hand.

Social Media Monitoring:

To acquire insights into consumer sentiments, conversations, and preferences about travel, the Olmos Travel agency engages in the surveillance of social media platforms. This facilitates the identification of consumer requirements and emerging trends, both of which can inform the marketing strategy.

Customer Feedback and Reviews:

The Olmos Travel agency proactively gathers and evaluates customer feedback and reviews about the organization as well as its rivals. The feedback received offers significant insights into the levels of consumer satisfaction, potential areas that require enhancement, and viable avenues for differentiation.

Paid advertising:

Paid advertising is employed by the Olmos Travel agency through social media advertising functionalities to expand its reach and target particular demographic groups. They develop targeted advertising campaigns by taking into consideration variables including travel preferences, interests, and geographical location. This empowers them to efficiently advertise their offerings to prospective clients in Uzbekistan.

The marketing mix strategy for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the service sector is delineated by the Olmos Travel agency as an amalgamation of components employed to efficiently advertise and endorse services to the intended customers see table 6.

Table 6 THE MARKETING MIX STRATEGY FOR OLMOS TRAVEL AGENCY
Product: The Olmos Travel agency assists enterprises in discerning and creating services that align with the preferences and requirements of their intended clientele. The process of ascertaining the value-added services, travel experiences, destinations, and itineraries that will be provided
Pricing: The Olmos Travel agency aids enterprises in formulating a pricing strategy for their offerings, taking into account various elements including the service's provision cost, market competition, customer perception of value, and competitive pricing.
Place: The Olmos Travel agency assists enterprises in determining the optimal channels through which to connect with their intended clientele, be it physical travel agencies, online platforms, collaborative ventures with other companies, or a hybrid approach.
Promotion: The Olmos Travel agency formulates promotional tactics with the objectives of establishing recognition, stimulating curiosity, and convincing prospective clients to select the company's services.

Tactical strategy and recommendation by Olmos Travel agency

Manager Ms Z of Olmos Travel agency suggests the following as primary components of the marketing mix strategy for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the service industry:

- Olmos Travel agency assists SMEs in developing a pricing strategy that is in line with their target market and business objectives, and
- Olmos Travel agency emphasizes the significance of differentiating the services provided by SMEs in the service industry.

The implementation of a comprehensive marketing mix strategy yields favorable outcomes for Olmos Travel Agency, including heightened brand recognition, strengthened customer loyalty, and business expansion. Constantly monitoring market trends, consumer preferences, and competitors is critical for preserving the effectiveness and relevance of the marketing mix. Sustainably revising marketing strategies, augmenting service quality, and updating travel products are all methods by which an agency can maintain its competitiveness within the travel industry.

Case 4- Dialab Medical center in Uzbekistan

As per the assertions of Mr A, a manager at Dialab Medical Centre in Tashkent, the organization has executed several effective marketing strategies. Before anything else, Dialab Medical Centre determined that its target demographic comprised individuals in search of medical services in Uzbekistan. They developed focused promotional campaigns across multiple platforms, including radio stations, online newspapers, and local newspapers. The advertisements emphasized the competitive advantages, services, and expertise of the medical center. Furthermore, to establish referral networks, Dialab Medical Centre formed partnerships with regional hospitals, clinics, and general practitioners. By leveraging the pre-existing patient base of these collaborators, they were able to establish a strong reputation within the local healthcare ecosystem.

The following elements are taken into account by Dialab Medical Centre when devising a marketing strategy for a business in Uzbekistan: ensuring that the strategy is consistent with the organization's goals and objectives. Before commencing operations, Dialab Medical Centre undertakes comprehensive research to gain insights into the target market's psychographics, demographics, and healthcare requirements in Uzbekistan. Additionally, Dialab Medical Centre conducts an evaluation of the competitive environment within the healthcare sector of Uzbekistan. They analyze the strengths, weaknesses, marketing tactics, and pricing strategies of key competitors that they identify.

Furthermore, he stated that Dialab Medical Centre conducts market research to identify prospective customers and comprehend their requirements and preferences for small and medium-sized enterprises in Uzbekistan. Customer evaluations and feedback are proactively gathered and analyzed by Dialab Medical Centre. To gain insights into the requirements, inclinations, and challenges of their intended customers, they monitor patient satisfaction surveys, social media platforms, and online platforms.

In Uzbekistan, social media marketing strategies are indispensable for small and medium-sized enterprises, such as Dialab Medical Centre. Dialab Medical Centre demonstrates a

proactive approach towards its social media audience through timely responses to comments, messages, and inquiries. They promote discourse, respond to inquiries, and furnish precise information to cultivate confidence and establish their worth. On social media platforms, Dialab Medical Centre shares success tales, patient testimonials, and before-and-after images. By humanizing their brand and highlighting the favorable results of their services, they foster potential consumers' trust and confidence.

Mr. A underscored the following regarding the marketing mix strategy as defined by Dialab Medical Centre for small and medium enterprises operating in the service industry:

Tactical Strategy And Recommendation By Dialab Medical Centre

As fundamental elements of the marketing mix strategy, Dialab Medical Centre advises the following for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operating in the service industry:

a. SMEs ought to priorities the provision of distinctive and individualized services that cater to the particular requirements of their target clientele. This may entail the creation of specialized services, customized experiences, or novel methodologies that differentiate them from their rivals.

b. When formulating pricing strategies, SMEs ought to aim for equilibrium between value and affordability. This may entail implementing strategies such as competing pricing, flexible payment plans, or service aggregation to furnish consumers with economically viable solutions.

c. Personnel, including physicians, nurses, and technicians, are indispensable in ensuring the delivery of high-quality patient care. They supervise the vital signs of patients, administer dialysis treatments, and ensure the safe and efficient operation of the dialysis process. The knowledge and focus they possess have a direct influence on the health results and general welfare of their patients.

Dialab Medical Centre can achieve increased brand recognition, patient loyalty, and business expansion through the implementation of a comprehensive marketing mix strategy. Constantly monitoring market trends, patient preferences, and competitors is crucial for maintaining the relevance and efficacy of the marketing mix. Consistently implementing technological advancements, updating medical services, and adjusting marketing strategies to align with evolving patient demands are all viable approaches for the medical center to maintain competitiveness within the healthcare sector.

Case 5- Davr Bank in Uzbekistan

Davr Bank was established in Tashkent on September 29, 2001. Mr. B, a manager of the bank, stated that Davr Bank has implemented several effective marketing strategies. To begin with, Davr Bank recognizes the significance of customized communication in the realm of marketing. They ensure that small and medium-sized business receives individualized messages that effectively connect with their target demographic.

In addition, he stated that Davr Bank takes into account several factors to guarantee congruence with the organization's aims and objectives. By analyzing the competitive landscape, Davr Bank determines the distinct selling propositions and differentiators of its

clients. This data assists in strategically situating the company on the market and formulating approaches that differentiate it from rival firms.

He stated that Davr Bank employs a variety of methodologies to identify prospective customers and comprehend their requirements and preferences for small and medium-sized enterprises in Uzbekistan through market research:

- Davr Bank analyzes many data sources, including customer databases, market reports, and industry trends, to uncover patterns and trends.
- Davr Bank assists businesses in implementing focused advertising strategies on various social media channels. They employ the sophisticated targeting features offered by these platforms to effectively reach particular demographics, hobbies, or places, guaranteeing that the business's message reaches the appropriate audience.
- Davr Bank monitors the effectiveness of social media efforts by utilizing analytics technologies. They evaluate several metrics, including reach, engagement, click-through rates, and conversions, to assess the efficacy of marketing initiatives and implement data-driven modifications to enhance campaign performance.

According to him, Davr Bank carries out market research for small and medium enterprises in Uzbekistan to identify target consumers and get insight into their requirements and preferences. This is done using a range of different methods:

Davr Bank formulates the marketing mix plan for small and medium firms in the service industry by taking into account the following crucial elements see table 7.

Table 7
THE MARKETING MIX STRATEGY FOR DAVR BANK
Product: Davr Bank assists businesses in the service industry in clearly defining and improving their service offerings to guarantee they are in line with the demands and preferences of their customers.
Pricing: Davr Bank engages in partnerships with businesses to establish suitable pricing strategies for their services. To build competitive and successful pricing models, they take into account several elements like market demand, competition, cost structures, and perceived value.
Promotion: Davr Bank formulates promotional tactics to enhance awareness and stimulate demand for its services. They devise focused advertising campaigns, deploy social media platforms, exploit strategic alliances, and utilize various marketing strategies to efficiently promote the services to the intended audience.
Place: Davr Bank aids firms in identifying the optimal distribution channels for providing their services.
People: Davr Bank acknowledges the significance of the human factor in the service sector. They assist organizations in prioritizing the training and development of their employees to provide outstanding customer service.

Tactical strategy and recommendation by Davr Bank

The primary components of the marketing mix strategy stated by a manager that Davr Bank recommends for SMEs in the service industry include:

a. Service Quality: Davr Bank prioritizes the significance of constantly providing services of exceptional quality. Their role includes aiding firms in creating quality control protocols, instructing workers to fulfill customer expectations, and overseeing customer happiness through feedback and evaluations.

b. Service Pricing: Davr Bank collaborates with businesses to formulate pricing strategies that take into account variables such as competitive pricing, cost structures, and perceived value.

They assist in identifying the most advantageous price thresholds that attract clients while guaranteeing profitability for the organization.

c. **Service Promotion:** Davr Bank aids firms in formulating focused and captivating promotional tactics for their services, including persuasive advertising campaigns, harnessing social media platforms, enhancing online visibility, and capitalizing on client testimonials and referrals.

d. **Service Customer Experience:** Davr Bank prioritizes the significance of establishing a favorable and unforgettable client experience.

By implementing a well-rounded marketing mix strategy, Davr Bank can benefit from increased brand recognition, customer loyalty, and business growth. It is important to continuously monitor market trends, customer preferences, and competition to ensure the marketing mix remains relevant and effective. Regularly updating banking products and services, adopting technological advancements, and adapting marketing strategies to changing customer needs can help the bank stay competitive in the financial industry.

Brief findings from interviews

Based on those interviews, it is evident that implementing a marketing mix plan enables small businesses and startups to successfully join the market. By identifying target markets, analyzing customer needs, and producing appealing marketing messages, firms may acquire a main portion of the market and achieve exposure among potential customers. Furthermore, the implementation of a marketing mix plan allows small firms and startups to distinguish themselves from their competition. Businesses may differentiate themselves in the market and draw customers away from competitors by providing distinctive product characteristics, competitive pricing, streamlined distribution networks, and impactful promotional efforts. Furthermore, a marketing mix plan offers a structured approach to establishing a robust brand identity. Small firms and startups may generate a favorable brand perception, earn client trust, and create long-term brand loyalty by creating an appealing product or service, determining the appropriate pricing, selecting proper distribution channels, and performing effective promotional efforts. Furthermore, the marketing mix enables organizations to precisely target certain customer categories.

Small firms and startups may customize their marketing strategies by comprehending the requirements, preferences, and actions of their intended audience. Implementing this focused strategy results in elevated conversion rates, enhanced consumer involvement, and an enhanced return on investment (ROI) for marketing endeavors. Moreover, the implementation of a marketing mix plan creates prospects for expansion and advancement. Small firms and startups can attract investors, gain collaborations, and explore new markets or geographic regions by strategically positioning their products or services. It can lead to the extension of the company, a gain in market share, and a boost in income sources. Ultimately, a marketing mix plan serves to establish and sustain robust customer connections for firms. Through the implementation of efficient communication strategies, the provision of exceptional customer service, and the delivery of experiences that offer additional value, small businesses and startups may strengthen customer loyalty, stimulate good word-of-mouth, and reap the advantages of repeat purchases and referrals.

Research Implication

Theoretical Implications

This study holds significant theoretical implications for the field of marketing in both the Uzbekistan context and other developing economies. By focusing on the application of the 7Ps framework within the specific socio-economic and cultural milieu of Uzbekistan, the research contributes to the advancement of localized marketing theories. Scholars such as Kotler and Armstrong (2018) emphasize the importance of tailoring marketing strategies to the unique characteristics of each market. This study builds upon their insights by providing a nuanced understanding of how the 7Ps framework can be adapted to foster SME growth in a developing economy like Uzbekistan. The theoretical framework developed in this research serves as a foundation for future studies exploring the applicability and adaptability of marketing concepts in diverse emerging markets.

Managerial Implications

The managerial implications of this research extend to practitioners, policymakers, and business owners operating in Uzbekistan and similar developing economies. The findings offer actionable insights into crafting effective marketing strategies for SMEs, aligning with the country's specific cultural, economic, and regulatory context. For instance, as highlighted by Porter (1980), understanding the competitive forces in a market is crucial for strategic management. In the Uzbekistan context, where the business landscape is shaped by unique factors, implementing the insights derived from this study can aid managers in formulating strategies that address the distinct challenges faced by SMEs. Policymakers can leverage these findings to design initiatives that support SMEs in aligning their marketing efforts with the 7Ps framework, fostering sustainable growth and contributing to the overall economic development of the country. This research thus serves as a practical guide for stakeholders seeking to navigate and excel in the marketing landscape of developing economies.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, this research has examined the structure of marketing strategy for small and medium-sized enterprises in Uzbekistan. The report acknowledges the significance of SMEs in stimulating economic expansion, facilitating the generation of employment opportunities, and encouraging innovation. The statement underscores the need to implement extensive support measures for SMEs to guarantee sustainable and fair economic advancement in Uzbekistan.

The study methodology utilized a mixed of descriptive and exploratory methodologies, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data-gathering techniques. Through the examination of entrepreneurs' perspectives on the adoption of marketing mix tactics and the use of interviews with entrepreneurs in the service sector, significant insights were acquired for the analysis of the collected data. The objective of the study was to create a comprehensive and effective marketing strategy by analyzing the influence of the link between marketing mix elements on the formation of SMEs.

The findings emphasize that SMEs may improve their marketing efforts, foster customer loyalty, and gain a competitive edge by systematically integrating elements of the marketing mix

strategy. The seven components of the marketing mix, including product, pricing, venue, promotion, people, process, and physical proof, play a crucial role in formulating successful marketing strategies for startups in Uzbekistan.

The study goals were accomplished through the development of a Marketing Mix Strategy utilizing the seven Ps for the formation of startups in Uzbekistan. Additionally, the advantages and prospects of applying this strategy for small and medium firms were examined. The dissertation enhances the theoretical foundation by highlighting the significant impact of SMEs on the worldwide economy and recognizing their pivotal role in promoting job possibilities.

To summarize, this study offers significant perspectives on the marketing strategy framework for small and medium-sized businesses in Uzbekistan. The results and recommendations can provide valuable guidance to entrepreneurs, policymakers, and stakeholders in formulating and executing efficient marketing strategies that foster the expansion and prosperity of SMEs in the service sector. SMEs in Uzbekistan may contribute to the country's economic growth by implementing a complete marketing mix strategy. This approach helps them overcome challenges, build brand awareness, attract customers, and increase their financial profits.

Limitations and Future Research

While this study has provided valuable insights into the marketing strategies employed SMEs in Uzbekistan, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations encountered during the research process. Firstly, the focus was primarily on the service sector, indicating a need for future studies to explore a broader range of industries to offer a comprehensive understanding of marketing techniques across various sectors.

Additionally, the study's sample size was limited, warranting future investigations to include a more diverse and extensive pool of entrepreneurs to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, reliance on self-reported data from participants may have introduced response bias, suggesting a need for empirical assessments and longitudinal analyses in subsequent research endeavors to validate the results.

Furthermore, while this study delved into the execution of the marketing mix plan, there remains an opportunity for future research to delve deeper into individual elements of the marketing mix, such as pricing tactics, distribution routes, and digital marketing methods. This specialized exploration could provide SMEs in Uzbekistan with more precise and tailored guidance to enhance their marketing effectiveness.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the understanding of marketing strategies for SMEs in Uzbekistan and offers valuable insights for their growth and competitiveness. By implementing a well-executed marketing mix plan, SMEs can not only achieve growth and foster brand loyalty but also gain a competitive edge in the market. The recommendations put forth aim to support the growth and prosperity of SMEs not only in Uzbekistan but also in other developing countries, thereby making a significant contribution to the economic advancement of nations.

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Appendix

Below you can find appendix table 1

Table 1	
MEASUREMENTS/ VARIABLES	
Research Concepts: Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, Physical Evidence, SME Establishment	
Construct	Variables/Scales
Product	1. I believe my new product development process is satisfactory.
	2. The present approach to product development results in financial gain
	3. I find my method of product production is satisfactory
Price	1. 1 How important do you consider the marketing mix of price for your SME's success?
	2. 11. How significance of that price of your product/service for your organization?
	3. 12. How important pricing strategies are valuable for maintaining market competitiveness?
Place	1. How important do you consider the marketing mix of place (distribution) for your SME's success?
	2. 14. How important do you consider your current distribution channels in your business?
	3. 15. I find my current distribution channel for the product is satisfactory
Promotion	1. Discounted prices offered
	2. Social media campaign used
	3. I believe, Advertising has a direct effect in my service
	4. Personal selling has a direct effect on my service.
People	1. How significant do you consider people (employees) to be as a component of the overall marketing mix for SMEs?
	2. The company values its customers and provides excellent customer service.
	3. My company trains employees to deliver a positive customer experience.
Process	1. The marketing processes in an organization should be clearly defined

	2. I believe regular monitoring and evaluation of marketing processes are necessary for identifying areas of improvement.
	3. The queue time of my service is relatively short
Physical Evidence	
	1. The service room in my business is clean and comfortable
	2. The service equipment is adequate to serve consumers well
	3. The physical evidence of a business, including its branding and design, communicates its identity and values effectively.
SME Establishment	1. To what extent are you receptive to implementing novel marketing strategies or instruments in order to enhance the marketing endeavors of your SME?
	2. How much flexibility does your SME establishment have in adjusting its product or service offerings based on market demands?
	3. How much freedom does your SME establishment have in choosing its business location or premises?

Interview questions:

- Can you provide an example of a successful marketing strategy you've implemented for a small and medium business in Uzbekistan? What were the main components of that strategy, and how did it contribute to the business's growth?
- When developing a marketing strategy for a business in Uzbekistan, what factors do you consider to ensure it aligns with the business's goals and objectives?
- How do you conduct market research for small and medium businesses to identify target customers and understand their needs and preferences?
- What role does a social medium play in marketing strategies for small and medium businesses in Uzbekistan? Can you provide examples of how you've leveraged social media platforms to drive engagement and brand awareness?
- How do you define the marketing mix strategy for small and medium businesses in the service industry?
- What are the primary components of the marketing mix strategy that you recommend for SMEs in the service industry?
- What role does product/service offering play in the marketing mix strategy for small businesses in the service industry?
- How would you approach pricing strategies for small and medium businesses in the service industry?
- What are some effective promotional methods or channels that you would suggest for small and medium businesses in the service industry?
- How do you assess and select appropriate distribution channels for small and medium businesses in the service industry?
- Can you provide examples of successful marketing mix strategies implemented by small and medium businesses in the service industry?
- How do you measure the effectiveness and success of a marketing mix strategy for small and medium businesses in the service industry?

Survey Questions:

Socio-demographic information

1. How old are you?

- Below 20 years
- 20-30
- 30-40
- 40-50
- 50 and above

2. What is your highest education level?

- Secondary
- Secondary Special
- Bachelor's degree
- Masters' degree
- PhD
- None

3. Which of the following best described your position at the company you operate?

- Owner and CEO
- Manager
- Executive staff

4. How will you classify your company/organization in terms of its size?

- Micro (Employees: Less than 10)
- Small (Employees: 10 to 49)
- Medium (Employees: 50 to 249)

5. Is your company/organization a family business?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

6. Does your company conduct some marketing research?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

7. What is the principal role that marketing serves within your organization?

- Market Research

- Marketing Strategy
- Branding and Positioning
- Advertising and Promotion
- All

8. Which marketing strategy do you employ to promote the establishment of SMEs?

- Digital marketing
- Marketing Mix Strategy
- Referral Marketing
- Search Engine Optimization
- All

9. What Drives the Adoption of the Marketing Mix by SMEs?

- Customer Preferences
- Competitive Landscape
- Technological Advancements
- Economic Conditions
- All

Hypothesis testing

Please rate your assessment of the following based on the level of agreement and disagreement:

Product (PRO)-Mix

10. I believe my new product development process is satisfactory.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

11. The present approach to product development results in financial gain

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree

- Strongly Agree

12. I find my method of product production is satisfactory.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Please rate your assessment of the following based on the level of important and unimportant:

PRICE (PRI) - Mix

13. How important do you consider the marketing mix of price for your SME's success?

- Strongly Unimportant
- Unimportant
- Neutral
- Important
- Strongly Important

14. How significance of that price of your product/service for your organization?

- Strongly Unimportant
- Unimportant
- Neutral
- Important
- Strongly Important

15. How important pricing strategies are valuable for maintaining market competitiveness?

- Strongly Unimportant
- Unimportant
- Neutral
- Important
- Strongly Important

Please rate your assessment of the following based on the level of importance with satisfaction:

Place (PLC) - Mix

16. How important do you consider the marketing mix of place (distribution) for your SME's success?

- Strongly Unimportant
- Unimportant
- Neutral
- Important
- Strongly Important

17. How important do you consider your current distribution channels in your business?

- Strongly Unimportant
- Unimportant
- Neutral
- Important
- Strongly Important

18. I find my current distribution channel for the product is satisfactory.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Please rate your assessment of the following based on the level of satisfaction:

Promotion (PROM) - Mix

Indicate the level of satisfaction of using the following promotional strategy in your service:

19. Discounted prices offered

- Strongly Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Strongly Satisfied

20. Social media campaign used

- Strongly Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied

- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Strongly Satisfied

Please rate your assessment of the following based on the level of agreement:

21. I believe, Advertising has a direct effect in my service

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

22. Personal selling has a direct effect on my service.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Please rate your assessment of the following based on the level of agreement and importance:

Physical Evidence (EVI)-Mix

23. I am familiar with the phrase "physical evidence" as it pertains to the field of marketing.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

24. How significant do you consider physical evidence to be as a component of the overall marketing mix for SMEs?

- Strongly Unimportant
- Unimportant
- Neutral

- Important
- Strongly Important

25. The physical evidence of a business, including its branding and design, communicates its identity and values effectively.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Please rate your assessment of the following based on the level of importance and agreement:

People (PEOP)-Mix

26. How significant do you consider people (employees) to be as a component of the overall marketing mix for SMEs?

- Strongly Unimportant
- Unimportant
- Neutral
- Important
- Strongly Important

27. The company values its customers and provides excellent customer service.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

28. My company trains employees to deliver a positive customer experience.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Please rate your assessment of the following based on the level of importance and agreement:

Process (PRO)-Mix

29. The marketing processes in an organization should be clearly defined

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

30. I consider the marketing process important as a component of the overall marketing mix for SMEs

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

31. I believe regular monitoring and evaluation of marketing processes are necessary for identifying areas of improvement.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Please rate your assessment of the following based on the level of freedom, receptiveness and flexibility:

SME growth (SME)

32. To what extent are you receptive to implementing novel marketing strategies or instruments in order to enhance the marketing endeavors of your SME?

- Extremely Unreceptive
- unreceptive
- Neutral
- Receptive

- Extremely receptive

33. How much flexibility does your SME establishment have in adjusting its product or service offerings based on market demands?

- Extremely Inflexible
- Inflexible
- Neutral
- Flexible
- Extremely Flexible

34. How much freedom does your SME establishment have in choosing its business location or premises?

- Extremely Unfree
- Unfree
- Neutral
- Free
- Extremely Free

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