

Influences of Service Marketing Mix and Socio-Cultural Factors on Consumers' Decision-Making toward Enrolling in Huiwu Dance Academy in Hainan, China

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Received: 29 July 2026 Revised: 30 August 2026 Accepted: 30 August 2026

Abstract

This study aimed to examine the influences of the service marketing mix (7Ps) and socio-cultural factors on consumers' decision-making toward enrolling in Huiwu dance academy in Hainan, China. A quantitative approach with a survey research design was employed. The target population consisted of current students and recent graduates of Huiwu dance academy, and a total of 385 respondents were selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used to summarize the data. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the influences of the Service Marketing Mix and Socio-Cultural Factors on consumers' decision-making.

The findings revealed that both the service marketing mix and socio-cultural factors significantly influenced consumers' decision-making toward enrolling in Huiwu dance academy. The service marketing mix model explained 43.0% of the variance in consumers' decision-making ($R^2 = .430$, Adjusted $R^2 = .420$), while the socio-cultural factors model explained 28.0% of the variance ($R^2 = .280$, Adjusted $R^2 = .274$). Among the service marketing mix dimensions, promotion had the strongest influence,

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followed by people, while the remaining dimensions also had significant positive effects. Among the socio-cultural factors, family influence was the strongest predictor, followed by social class and reference groups. These findings highlight the importance of integrating effective service marketing strategies with an understanding of socio-cultural influences to support consumers' enrollment decision-making in private dance education.

Keywords: Service marketing mix, Socio-cultural factors, Enrollment decision, Dance education, China

Introduction

In the contemporary service economy, cultural and educational activities have increasingly developed into experience-based services shaped by both marketing strategies and socio-cultural influences. Dance education represents one such service, combining skill development, physical activity, artistic expression, and social interaction. As consumers increasingly seek educational experiences that provide both functional and experiential value, dance academies must compete not only through instructional quality but also through effective service delivery and marketing strategies (Kotler & Keller, 2022; Zeithaml et al., 2018). Consequently, understanding the factors that influence consumers' enrollment decisions has become increasingly important for private dance education providers.

From a service marketing perspective, the service marketing mix (7Ps) including product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how service organizations create and deliver value to consumers (Booms & Bitner, 1981; Kotler & Keller, 2022). In educational services, these elements encompass program offerings, tuition fees, accessibility, instructors and staff, service processes, promotional activities, and the physical learning environment, all of which may influence consumers' service selection (Zeithaml et al., 2018). Accordingly, this study applies the service marketing

mix from a service management perspective to examine consumers' enrollment decision-making.

However, educational service decisions are influenced not only by organizational marketing activities but also by consumers' social and cultural environments. Family Influence may shape educational choices through advice, expectations, and financial support; reference groups may affect perceptions and preferences; and social class may influence financial capacity, lifestyle, and evaluations of educational alternatives (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019). These influences are particularly relevant in the Chinese educational context, where family and social relationships can play important roles in educational choices. Therefore, incorporating Socio-Cultural Factors alongside the service marketing mix provides a broader perspective for understanding consumers' enrollment decision-making.

China provides a particularly relevant context for examining these relationships because private education remains an important component of the national education system. In 2024, China had 152,847 non-government educational institutions (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2026). Moreover, China's education and training sector has undergone substantial restructuring following the implementation of the "Double Reduction" policy. Zhao et al. (2024) found that the policy reduced participation in language related commercial tutoring while increasing participation in sports-related training, indicating changes in consumers' demand for different forms of extracurricular education. These developments have created a changing environment in which private training providers must respond to evolving consumer preferences and social expectations.

Huiwu dance academy, established in 2014 in Hainan, China, provides international standard dance and other dance-related programs. As a private experiential education provider, consumers' enrollment decisions may be shaped by both service related factors, including instructors, service processes, learning environments, and marketing communication, and the socio-cultural context surrounding prospective consumers. The academy therefore provides an appropriate setting for examining how service marketing mix and socio-cultural factors contribute to consumers' enrollment decision-making.

Despite the extensive application of service marketing concepts in education and service research, prior studies have frequently emphasized outcomes such as satisfaction and behavioral intentions, while less attention has been given to enrollment decision-making in specialized experiential education services such as private dance training. In addition, marketing related factors and socio-cultural influences are often examined separately, limiting understanding of how the two groups of factors contribute to consumers' educational choices. To address these theoretical and contextual gaps, this study examines the influences of the service marketing mix and socio-cultural factors on consumers' decision-making toward enrolling in Huiwu dance academy in Hainan, China. The study thereby extends the application of enrollment decision-making in experiential education and provides practical insights for private dance education providers.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the influence of the service marketing mix on consumers' decision-making toward enrolling in Huiwu dance academy in Hainan, China.
2. To examine the influence of socio-cultural factors on consumers' decision-making toward enrolling in Huiwu dance academy in Hainan, China.

Research Hypotheses

H1: Service marketing mix factors have a positive influence on consumers' decision-making toward enrolling in Huiwu dance academy in Hainan, China.

H2: Socio-cultural factors have a positive influence on consumers' decision-making toward enrolling in Huiwu dance academy in Hainan, China.

Conceptual Framework

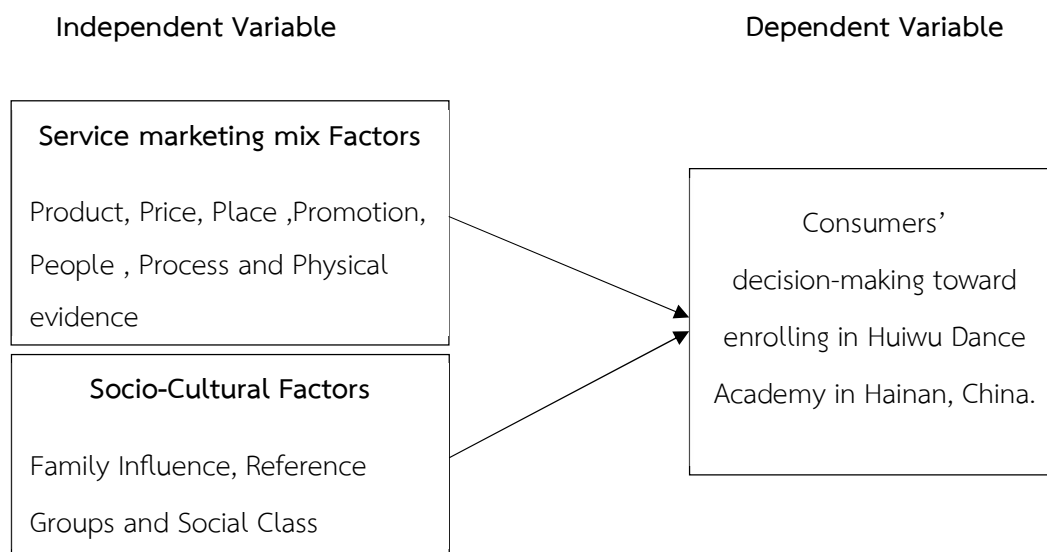


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Research Methods

Research Design

The research used a quantitative research design using a survey method to study the influences of the service marketing mix and socio-cultural factors on consumers' decision-making toward enrolling in Huiwu dance academy in Hainan, China.

Population and Sample

The population of the present study consisted of current students and recent graduates of Huiwu dance academy in Hainan Province, China, who had direct experience with the educational services provided by the academy. Current students were defined as learners who had attended classes for at least three months, and recent graduates were defined as individuals who had completed or discontinued their training within one year. Because the exact size of the target population could not be determined, the sample size was calculated using Cochran's (1953) formula for an unknown population. Based on a 95% confidence level ($Z = 1.96$), an estimated population proportion of 0.50, and a margin of error of 0.05, the minimum required

sample size was approximately 385 respondents. Accordingly, 385 valid responses were included in the final analysis. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was used to recruit participants who met the study's eligibility criteria, ensuring that all respondents had sufficient experience with the academy to assess the research variables.

Research Instrument

Data were collected through a self-administered structured questionnaire that was developed based on a review of relevant theories and empirical studies. The questionnaire consisted of four sections. The first section collected respondents' demographic information. The second section measured the service marketing mix. the third section measured socio-cultural factors. The final section measured consumers' decision-making toward enrolling in Huiwu dance academy. All construct items were assessed using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Content validity was evaluated by three experts in the fields of business administration, marketing, and consumer behavior. The Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) values of the items ranged between 0.67 and 1.00, indicating satisfactory content validity. A pilot study was carried out with 30 respondents to test the internal consistency of the instrument. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all constructs exceeded 0.70, indicating acceptable reliability and supporting the use of the questionnaire in the main survey.

Data Collection

The respondents were approached directly at Huiwu Dance Academy and its affiliated branches in Hainan Province. Participants were informed of the research aims and were assured that their participation was voluntary and that their responses would remain confidential and anonymous prior to completing the questionnaire. Only completed and valid questionnaires were retained for subsequent statistical analyses, resulting in a final sample of 385 respondents.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the study variables. These statistics included frequency,

percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Multiple regression analysis was employed to examine the influences of the Service Marketing Mix and Socio-Cultural Factors on consumers' decision-making toward enrolling in Huiwu Dance Academy

Before hypothesis testing, the assumptions of multiple regression analysis were assessed. Multicollinearity was evaluated using tolerance values and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), while the Durbin-Watson statistic was used to assess the independence of residuals. A significance level of 0.05 was adopted for hypothesis testing.

Research Results

Respondent Characteristics

In this study, a total of 385 valid questionnaires were analyzed. The majority of the respondents were female (56.88%) and aged 20–25 years (44.68%) and had a monthly income or financial support of less than 3,000 CNY (52.21%). Most respondents were current students who had studied at Huiwu dance academy for more than three months (71.69%) and had 7–12 months of dance experience (41.56%). Friends and word-of-mouth were the main sources of information about the academy (55.84%), followed by social media and advertisements (29.35%).

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the study constructs and their dimensions. Overall, decision-making had the highest mean score ($M = 3.33$), followed by the service marketing mix ($M = 3.29$) and socio-cultural factors ($M = 3.28$), with all constructs perceived at a moderate level. Among the service marketing mix dimensions, Place had the highest mean score, followed by promotion and process, whereas product had the lowest. Among the socio-cultural factors, reference groups had the highest mean score, followed by family influence and social class. All dimensions were perceived at a moderate level.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of the study constructs and dimensions

Construct/Dimension	Mean	SD	Level	Rank
Service Marketing Mix	3.29	0.72	Moderate	–
Product	3.24	1.01	Moderate	7
Price	3.29	0.97	Moderate	4
Place	3.34	1.01	Moderate	1
Promotion	3.33	0.99	Moderate	2
People	3.26	1.07	Moderate	5
Process	3.32	1.04	Moderate	3
Physical Evidence	3.25	1.09	Moderate	6
Socio-Cultural Factors	3.28	0.78	Moderate	–
Family Influence	3.26	0.99	Moderate	2
Reference Groups	3.35	0.98	Moderate	1
Social Class	3.25	1.08	Moderate	3
Decision-Making	3.33	1.05	Moderate	–

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the influences of the service marketing mix and socio-cultural factors on consumers' decision-making toward enrolling in Huiwu dance academy. Two regression models were estimated. Model 1 tested the influences of the seven service marketing mix dimensions, whereas model 2 tested the influences of the three socio-cultural factors. Prior to hypothesis testing, the assumptions of multiple regression analysis were examined. All tolerance values were above 0.10, all Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were below 10, and the Durbin–Watson statistics were close to 2.00, indicating no serious multicollinearity problems and supporting the independence of residuals.

Effects of the service marketing mix on decision-making

Table 2 Multiple regression analysis of the service marketing mix dimensions

Predictor	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Product	.128	2.696	.007
Price	.126	2.663	.008
Place	.127	2.688	.008
Promotion	.158	3.441	.001
People	.153	3.101	.002
Process	.124	2.606	.010
Physical Evidence	.122	2.503	.013
Model statistics: $R = .656$, $R^2 = .430$, Adjusted $R^2 = .420$			

The results of model 1 are shown in table 2. All seven dimensions of the service marketing mix had significant positive influences on consumers' decision-making toward enrolling in Huiwu dance academy ($p < .05$). Among the seven dimensions, promotion was the strongest predictor ($\beta = .158$, $p = .001$), followed by people ($\beta = .153$, $p = .002$), product ($\beta = .128$, $p = .007$), place ($\beta = .127$, $p = .008$), price ($\beta = .126$, $p = .008$), process ($\beta = .124$, $p = .010$), and physical evidence ($\beta = .122$, $p = .013$) also had significant positive influences on consumers' decision-making. The seven dimensions collectively explained 43.0% of the variance in consumers' decision-making ($R^2 = .430$, Adjusted $R^2 = .420$). Therefore, hypothesis 1 was supported.

Effects of Social-Cultural Factors on Decision-Making

Table 3 Multiple regression analysis of the social-cultural dimensions

Predictor	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Family Influence	.307	6.370	< .001
Reference Groups	.186	3.780	< .001
Social Class	.191	3.891	< .001
Model statistics: $R = .529$, $R^2 = .280$, Adjusted $R^2 = .274$			

The results of model 2 are shown in table 3. All three socio-cultural factors had significant positive influences on consumers' decision-making toward enrolling in Huiwu dance academy ($p < .001$). Among the three dimensions, family influence was

the strongest predictor ($\beta = .307$, $p < .001$), followed by social class ($\beta = .191$, $p < .001$) and reference groups ($\beta = .186$, $p < .001$). The three dimensions collectively explained 28.0% of the variance in consumers' decision-making ($R^2 = .280$, Adjusted $R^2 = .274$). Therefore, hypothesis 2 was supported.

Research Discussion

Influence of the Service Marketing Mix on Decision-Making

The first research objective was to examine the influence of the service marketing mix on consumers' decision-making toward enrolling in Huiwu dance academy. The findings revealed that all seven dimensions including product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence positively influenced consumers' decision-making, with promotion emerging as the strongest predictor, followed by people. These findings suggest that consumers consider multiple aspects of service delivery when evaluating a dance academy rather than relying on a single marketing attribute.

The findings support the extended service marketing mix framework proposed by Booms and Bitner (1981), which emphasizes the combined roles of product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence in creating customer value. They are also consistent with Kotler and Keller (2022), who explain that consumers rely on multiple service-related cues when evaluating intangible services. In educational settings, this perspective is supported by previous studies showing that the Service Marketing Mix contributes to institutional selection, enrollment intention, and perceived service quality (Napitupulu et al., 2023; Ambarwati et al., 2024; Zebua & Us, 2025). Collectively, these findings reinforce the applicability of the service marketing mix for explaining enrollment decision-making in private educational services.

Among the seven dimensions, promotion emerged as the strongest predictor, highlighting the importance of communication in private dance education. Because prospective learners may have limited opportunities to evaluate the learning experience before enrollment, promotional activities can provide information about

programs, instructors, learning environments, student achievements, and expected learning outcomes, thereby reducing uncertainty in enrollment decisions. This interpretation is consistent with Kotler and Keller (2022) and with Saksono et al. (2025), who found that digital marketing and social media communication were associated with institutional credibility and enrollment intention.

People emerged as the second strongest predictor, reflecting the important role of instructors and service personnel in educational service delivery. Their teaching competence, communication skills, responsiveness, and interpersonal interactions can shape learners' service experiences and perceptions of the academy. This finding is consistent with Booms and Bitner (1981) and Zeithaml et al. (2018), who emphasize the role of employees in service delivery and customer perceptions of service quality. Thus, effective promotional communication should be supported by competent instructors and high-quality interpersonal service to strengthen consumers' enrollment decisions.

Influence of Social-Cultural Factors on Decision-Making

The second research objective was to examine the influence of socio-cultural factors on consumers' decision-making toward enrolling in Huiwu dance academy. All three dimensions including family influence, reference groups, and social class positively influenced consumers' decision-making, with family influence emerging as the strongest predictor. These findings support the consumer behavior perspective that educational choices are shaped not only by evaluations of service attributes but also by interpersonal and socio-cultural environments (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019). They are also consistent with Hofstede's (2001) collectivism perspective, which highlights the importance of family expectations and social relationships in individual decision-making.

The prominent role of Family Influence suggests that family considerations are particularly relevant to enrollment decisions. This may be especially important for young consumers who rely on family members for financial support, advice, encouragement, or approval regarding educational choices. This interpretation is consistent with previous studies demonstrating the importance of parental support, family expectations, and family involvement in educational participation and

decision-making in the Chinese context (Yang, 2025; Yang et al., 2025; Cao, 2026). Together, these findings reinforce the relevance of family relationships in consumers' educational decision-making.

An important distinction emerged between the descriptive and regression results. Although Reference Groups had the highest perceived level among the socio-cultural factors, family influence emerged as the strongest predictor of consumers' decision-making. This suggests that the factor perceived at the highest level is not necessarily the factor most strongly associated with enrollment decisions. Reference groups, including friends, classmates, and online social networks, may contribute to consumers' awareness, information seeking, and perceptions of the academy, whereas family considerations may be more relevant to enrollment decisions. However, because the study did not directly examine the mechanisms through which these influences operate, this interpretation should be treated cautiously. The relevance of reference groups is consistent with Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory and with Liang et al. (2024), who highlighted the roles of peer recommendations and online communities in educational participation.

New Knowledge

Based on the research findings, this study proposes the Integrated Dance Academy Decision Model (IDAD Model) as a conceptual and interpretive model for understanding consumers' decision-making toward enrolling in private dance education. The model integrates two complementary perspectives: service related factors, represented by the Service Marketing Mix (7Ps), with promotion and people emerging as the most prominent predictors, and socio-cultural factors, with Family Influence emerging as the most prominent predictor, followed by Social class and reference groups. Unlike traditional 7Ps models that primarily emphasize service related factors or consumer behavior models that focus on social influences, the IDAD model brings both perspectives together within the specific context of private dance education. The model does not imply statistically tested interaction or mediation between these factors; rather, it provides an integrated conceptual

framework derived from the empirical findings that can serve as a foundation for future statistical validation. As shown in Figure 2.

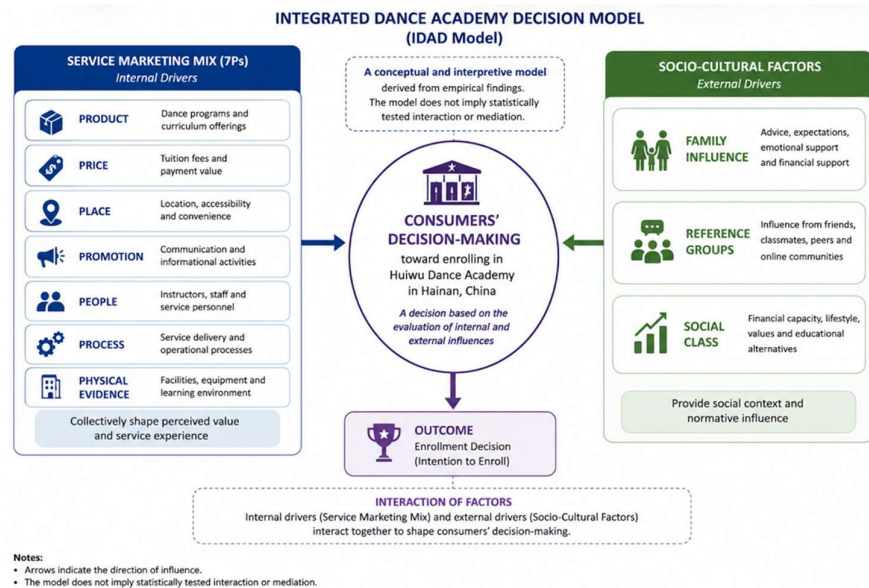


Figure 2 The Integrated Dance Academy Decision Model (IDAD Model)

Research Suggestions

Practical Implementation Suggestions

1. Dance academies should prioritize Promotion and People by using targeted digital communication to present program information, instructor expertise, learning outcomes, and student experiences, while continuously developing instructors' teaching and interpersonal service skills.

2. Given the importance of Family Influence, academies should provide parents and family members with clear information on program objectives, fees, schedules, instructor qualifications, and expected learning outcomes through family-oriented communication and trial or open house activities.

Future Research Suggestions

1. Further research should focus on other factors such as service quality, customer satisfaction, brand image, or perceived value to enhance the explanatory power of consumer decision making in educational services.

2. There is a need for future research to replicate the study in different regions, educational institutions or cultural settings to compare the influence of service marketing and socio-cultural factors and to increase the generalizability of the findings.

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